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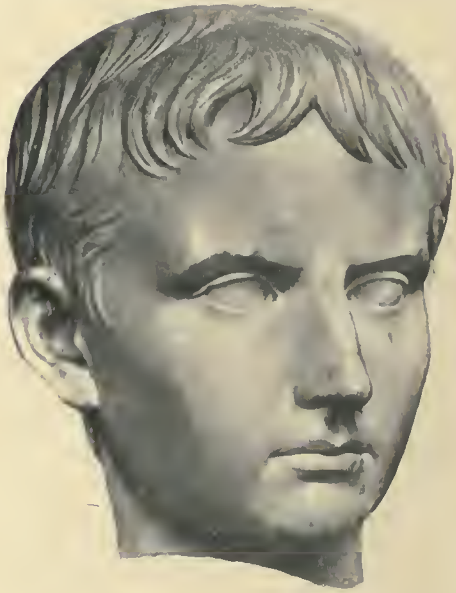

HEAD OF YOUNG AUGUSTUS.

(Vatican.)

Plate 1.

ROMAN ART

SOME OF ITS PRINCIPLES AND THEIR APPLICATION TO EARLY CHRISTIAN PAINTING

BY

FRANZ WICKHOFF

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

MRS. S. ARTHUR STRONG, LL.D.

EDITOR OF FURTWÄNGLER'S "MASTERPIECES OF GREEK
SCULPTURE"; OF "THE ELDER PLINY'S CHAPTERS
ON THE HISTORY OF ART" &c.

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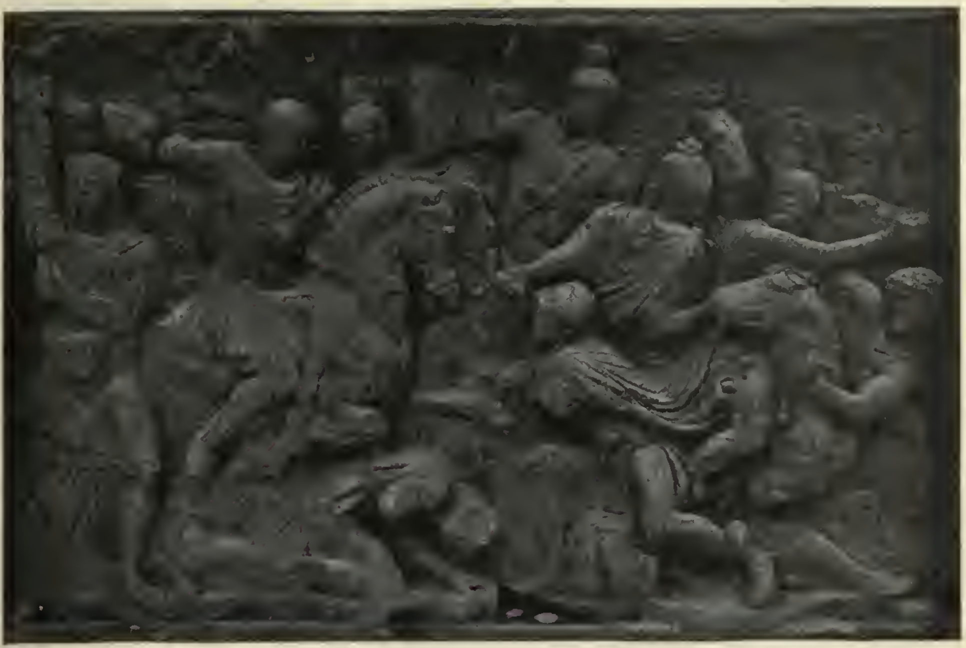

FIG. A.—Trajanic relief (Arch of Constantine). From a photograph by D. Anderson

Author's Preface to the English Edition

THE Imperial Library in Vienna possesses a series of extraordinarily valuable illuminated manuscripts dating from the earliest period of Christian Art. Among them are the fragments of the first Book of Moses in Greek, written on purple parchment and displaying on every page below the text a large picture remarkable for its age, its artistic merit, and its wealth of imagery. These pictures are among the oldest illustrations to the Bible that have been preserved. They were published by Lambecius in the year 1670, and again in 1776 by Kollar. These engravings, however, were inaccurate after the fashion of the time; for they reproduced the pictures only with considerable variations. Accordingly, an edition which should satisfy modern requirements became necessary, and it was issued as a supplement to the *Jahrbuch der Kunstsammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, under the title of *Die Wiener Genesis herausgegeben von Wilhelm Ritter von Härtel und Franz Wickhoff.** The task was divided between the authors in such a manner that Härtel undertook the description of the manuscript and of the Greek text, and Wickhoff that of the pictures. The latter also contributed an essay in which he fully discussed the transformations of style in ancient art, to the closing period of which these pictures belong.

---

* Vienna, 1895.

Of the innumerable learned men who have worked at Classical Archæology, almost all had hitherto devoted themselves exclusively to Greek art, and had neglected to observe the phenomena of the development of style, which successively appear throughout the Imperial epoch of Roman history. On the other hand, the scholars occupied with early Christian art had concerned themselves solely with the explanation of the subjects represented, without reference to the artistic questions involved. The author has endeavoured to fill this gap. He has attempted an historical account of style in Roman Art, both in painting and in sculpture, from about the period of Augustus to that of Constantine. This history, detached from the background of the *Wiener Genesis*, is now offered to the English public.

Translator's Note

ALTHOUGH in his Preface Professor Wickhoff has sufficiently explained the origin and scope of his work, I would yet wish to draw attention to one or two points which appear to be of special interest to students of the subject. The Art of Rome has suffered too long, if not actual neglect, at any rate under the imputation of being nothing but the last chapter of the long history of Greek art—in fact, a sort of decadent anti-climax. And yet Greek and Roman art can, no more than Greek and Roman literature, be treated as episodes of unequal value in one and the same development. Entirely independent in their origin, they met and mingled for a time in what Professor Wickhoff has so aptly named the "Augustan style"—a style plentifully illustrated by busts and by numberless reliefs, hitherto erroneously classed as Hellenistic. Fortunately for the subsequent development of art, the stronger Roman element transfused and tempered by the union, was to predominate over the Greek, which at that time had long been enfeebled, and in fact was on the point of exhaustion. Professor Wickhoff shows how entirely Roman in its native strength is that superb Imperial art of which the finest examples are the "picture reliefs" from the Arches of Titus and of Trajan. This style interpenetrated every artistic product of the time; made itself felt right down into the beginnings of Christian art; and, though obscured and weakened, maintained its identity throughout the Middle Ages to break into new life and light under the quickening influence of the Renascence. Who that has studied such sculpture as that on the Arch at Benevento can doubt the original source whence the early Trecentists drew their wave of inspiration? Even now, the part played either in the dark ages of Art, or at its Revival, by Byzantinism, *i.e.*, by the *debased Mediæval Hellenic tradition*, seems exaggerated by historians of the subject. For it is surely an error in historical judgment to refer to Byzantium for the very influences and traditions which surrounded the artists on their native soil.

Pompeian painting, which was so notable an episode in the development of art on Italian soil, has been entirely neglected of late years, at any rate in England, where the fashionable fondness for the archaic as such, which still pervades popular lectures and handbooks, has powerfully interfered with the free observation and unprejudiced judgment of art. Not only does Wickhoff restore historically to the place they deserve the inestimable relics of Pompeian painting, but he discusses the æsthetic problems they present in a thoroughly modern spirit : he gives us what is so far unique in the criticism of ancient art, namely, a book *in which the historical survey is supported throughout by a searching analysis into the æsthetic causes and conditions of artistic change.* Those interested in the subject will appreciate the masterly exposition of the ancient painters' struggle with the problem of form in three dimensions (till in their picture-reliefs they attain the illusion of illimitable depth), and of their slow progress from conventional colouring to the full mastery of painting in "plein air."

Considering, then, the novelty of the ideas expressed in the book, even in connection with familiar monuments, it seemed desirable to illustrate the present edition pretty freely. The greater number of these illustrations are given by special arrangement with Messrs. Alinari of Florence, while Mr. D. Anderson of Rome, Messrs. G. Brogi of Florence, and Messrs. F. Bruckmann of Munich have generously allowed me the *free* use of certain of their photographs. I have to thank Professor Conze and Professor Benndorf for allowing me to draw from the publications of the German Archæological Institute and of the *Wiener Vorlegeblätter* respectively; Dr. Mau and his publisher for permission to reproduce various plates from his work on Pompeian paintings. The superb Trajanic relief—so shamefully degraded to adorn the Arch of Constantine—which deserves to rank with the supreme achievements of Periclean or Renascence art, is illustrated in the text only by a miserable little cut taken from Rossini's work. Fortunately, at the last moment I was able, owing to a courteous intermediary, to give as headpiece to the Preface a zincotype after D. Anderson's recent and still unpublished photograph. Lastly, and above all, I have to thank my husband for revising the whole of the translation from end to end and helping me to fix the difficult æsthetic terminology.

The Preface to the German edition is dated January 1895. The alterations now introduced are from the author's hand. The few notes contributed by me are enclosed within square brackets.

In 1896, Dr. Theodor Schreiber contributed to the *Jahrbuch des archäo-*

logischen Instituts an article in which he maintained the Hellenistic origin of those reliefs which Wickhoff had declared, and, as we believe, proved to be Roman, and in the main Augustan. Only a few months ago a French *savant*, M. Edmond Courbaud, has, in his work *Le Bas Relief Romain*, once again disputed Wickhoff's contention of the internal independence of Roman art from the Greek. In spite of certain fine pages of artistic appreciation based upon—or even, as he acknowledges, borrowed from—Wickhoff (see p. 123 ff.), Courbaud, as a rule, substitutes for the analysis and criticism of *form* and of the *informing spirit*, the doctrine of identity of origin where he detects similarities or coincidences of *shape* and of *subject*, while in discussing the "Hellenistic reliefs" he too readily accepts Hellenistic literature as a guide to the character of the formative art of the period. Yet the book is an able and learned archæological compilation, and it usefully represents what may be called the pre-Wickhoffian stage of the subject. Moreover it should be welcome as a proof of the growing popularity of the subject of Roman art, and recognition of its importance.

EUGÉNIE STRONG, *née* SELLERS.

July 1900.

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Corrigenda

P. 31, l. 5, *and passim: For* Ara Pacis Augusti *read* Ara Pacis Augustæ.

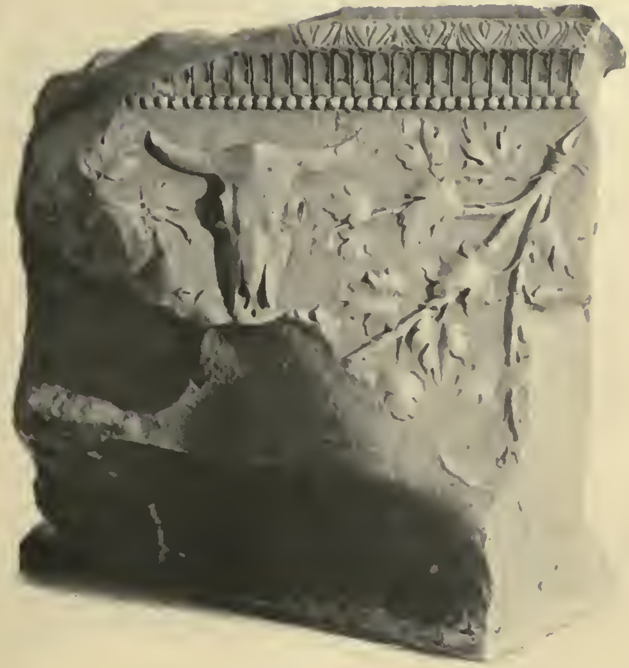
P. 32, ll. 15, 16: "It was a smaller frieze. . . ." The original of this passage was written before the appearance of Professor Petersen's article in the *Römische Mittheilungen* (see my note on p. 31, E. S.) where he has conclusively shown that the slabs with the sacrificial scenes are of identical dimensions with those on which the processions are displayed, and belong, therefore, like the latter to the exterior decoration of the altar. The two slabs in question were on either side of the allegorical relief, illustrated below in Fig. 8, the three being part of the exterior decoration of the posterior wall.

P. 39, l. 27: *for* Shreiber *read* Schreiber.

P. 43, Fig. 17: *dele* Augustan (*vide* p. 39, l. 30).

P. 79, l. 11: *for* Shrew-bread *read* Shew-bread.

P. 111, l. 33: The Imperial galley, with Trajan at the helm, does not appear on Fig. 41, which illustrates an earlier scene: a boat conveying horses; above, a galley with a bearded personage at the helm; on the extreme left, Trajan is seen descending to enter his galley.



ALTAR DECORATED WITH PLANE LEAVES.

(Museo delle Terme.)

Plate IV.

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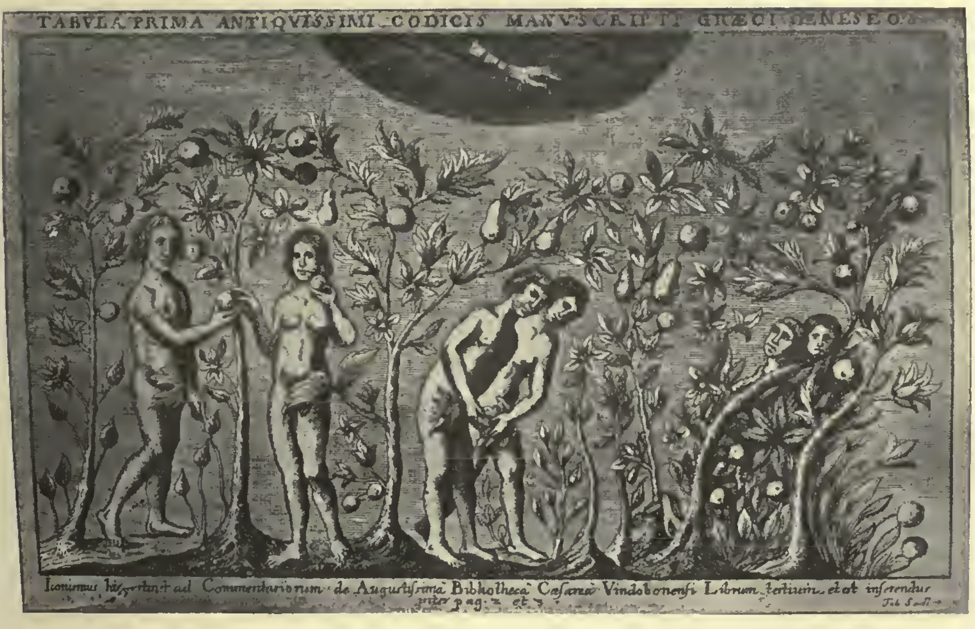
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FIG. 1.—The Fall. From the Book of Genesis in Vienna (after Lambecius)

ROMAN ART

I

IF we wish to make clear to ourselves the principles of Roman art, particularly of representative art as expressed in pictorial and plastic form, we shall find it simplest to work backwards to the sources. It must be obvious to the eye of the most superficial observer that the early Christian art which is based upon late antique models follows other principles than the Hellenistic art which had been adopted by the Romans in the first century B.C. It is evident, therefore, that, in the interval during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire, a powerful reaction must have taken place. In order to understand this reaction, we must consider it first in its results, and work back thence to their determining causes.

Let us begin by investigating the circumstances which led to the illustration of the Bible. Cyclic compositions from the Bible first appear in the fourth century. How was it, we are compelled to ask that these stories did not, until so late, become subject matter for representative art, seeing that they had long previously been committed to writing, and had passed for at least a thousand years a non-pictorial existence?

It is not enough to rest content with the fact that the Bible was at last illustrated in the fourth century of our era. The conditions under which it came to be furnished with illustrations were the more remarkable in that the Bible was a book, or rather a collection of books, second to none in influence and importance.

Definite conceptions of a pictorial nature had also floated before the minds of the Hebrew poets and chroniclers, conceptions which took further shape in their representative art. To be sure they expressed nothing but what had haunted the formative imagination of the people, for no poetry floats *in vacuo* without stimulus from the world of sense as it passes in show before the mind's eye of the poet and of his naïve listener. But formative art often limps but slowly after the swift imagination of the poet, because its difficult means of representation are only gradually discovered or mastered, and many peoples have never succeeded in expressing and handing down to posterity in pictorial form the whole accumulation of thought and feeling stored up in their poetry.

Among the Jews this relation is peculiarly complicated. The policy of the prophets, which had triumphed at last in the seventh century before our era, tended to separate and to cleanse their religion from the contamination of those forms of representative art which they shared with the rest of civilised Asia. And now when, a thousand years later, the Bible was to be illustrated, that imagery which had once been, as it were, the base and framework of the imagery of its poets had, like the corresponding monuments, been long buried and forgotten. The new pictures had to be created out of the imaginative content of a new world, which, however, arose from directly contrary conceptions of religion and poetry, seeing that from the point of view of ethical character nothing can be conceived more different than the authors of the Bible and the artists of Greece and Rome. Thus the

Bible was illustrated at a period other than that of its production and by people other than those for whom it was written : not as a national book of the Jews, but as a book intended for all Christians living scattered far and wide throughout the great Roman Empire.

These illustrations to the Bible arose not gradually, like those of the Epic cycle, and in correspondence with the changes in the nation which produced them ; they had to be developed afresh. *The filling in of a poetic framework from which the imagery that once informed it had faded away, with a fresh imaginative content drawn from another cycle of forms, was the problem which the first Christian artists had to solve.*

Corresponding to every poetry, then, there are definite pictorial conceptions which can find expression in pictorial art. The cycle of types which the authors of the Bible had before them can still be made out, if not in detail, nevertheless in their general nature and compass. In point of fact all relics of the ancient formative art had been destroyed down to their last traces by the Synagogue during its supremacy of nearly one thousand years ; but the Bible itself still retains sufficient evidence of it. The book of which the central point is now fixed by the commandment : "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image," still contains, after its many revisions, more details upon formative art than the whole of ancient classical Greek literature—poetry and prose put together. Although we chiefly have only the prophets' scorn and execration of the crucible, the hammer, and the chisel, they are none the less striking proofs that images of the gods were fabricated for centuries without interruption. In all the portions of the Bible which are older than the Babylonian captivity, we hear the goldsmith's hammer fashioning the metal plates for those images which were the forerunners of Pheidias' statues in ivory and gold.

Life-sized wooden images of the divinity, as we gather from an old popular song preserved in the First Book of Samuel, were part of the furniture, at any rate of the dwellings of princes. It is na[illegible]ted that when Saul sent a messenger to murder David, Michal laid the wooden *teraphim* in the bed, in the place of David, who had escaped, covered it with clothes, and put a goat-skin under its head, so that Saul's messenger mistook it for the sick David.* This presupposes that whoever wrote down this story of Michal's cunning deemed it no offence that the house of the great national hero should contain a life-sized wooden image. The golden calves to which sacrifice was offered in Bethel, the statues of beaten gold encasing a wooden core, such as Gideon set up at Ophra out of the booty taken from the Midianites, originally gave no cause for scandal. They were common to the Israelites, with the Syrians and the other peoples of the coast, and an offshoot of the art of the Euphrates, which, perhaps originally influenced by Egypt, now reigned throughout Asia, though variously modified or transformed.

The Chaldeans had erected lofty pyramids, built up on the plan of successive platforms, to serve as the base of a sanctuary which, placed on the highest terrace of all, formed the summit of the edifice. Cased with various coloured tiles, often also gilded or silvered, they were counted among the wonders of the world. Even the Greeks had heard of the fame of that temple of Bel which, raised on a similar system of terraces, looked down upon Babylon from the clouds. The ancient Israelites also had heard from awestruck travellers of this building which appeared to touch the heavens, and it had powerfully impressed the imagination of their old poets. According to some, when their eponym Israel departed into Mesopotamia, he dreamt a marvellous dream on a night when he lay in the open with a stone under his head. He beheld a similar pyramid of steps—a ladder, the naïve translation calls it—which reached from earth to heaven, "and the angels of God ascending and descending on it." At the top stood the Lord, and spoke to him the words of promise. "How holy is this place," said Jacob as he woke from his sleep; "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."† Among these simple herdsmen there were still other writers, who, perhaps, dwelling further from the highways of travel, and being accordingly less well informed, had yet heard of these towering edifices; they regarded it as a sign of the arrogance and wickedness of mankind to wish to build a tower which should reach up to heaven,* and tacked on to this account of the building of the Tower of Babel the oldest explanation of the diversity of languages. It is easy to see that the poets of the legend of Jacob understood these buildings better than those who described the building of Babel. The palaces of the kings in the cities of Mesopotamia also exercised the imagination of the Jews during successive centuries in the same way as the temples. The gates were guarded by pairs of gigantic watchmen of a fourfold nature, having a human head, the body of a lion, the wings of eagles, and the hoofs of bulls. The Jews imagined Jehovah surrounded by state similar to that of the kings of the Babylonians and Assyrians, and not only do those composite beings, called Cherubim, appear as the escort of God in descriptions of the heavenly royalty, not only does a Cherub stand at the gate of Paradise, as at the gate of the Palace of Nineveh, but when they came to adorn the house of God in Jerusalem, they repeatedly introduced their image and placed the sacred ark between their wings.

---

* 1 Samuel xix. 11–16.

† Gen. xxviii. 11–17.

The Jews, then, had depended for the pictorial elements in their ancient poetry and art upon descriptions and reminiscences of Mesopotamian art, with the occasional use of the minor arts of Egypt as a model. At the close of the first period of their history, when they had already abandoned the formative arts, they were once more brought into direct contact, during the Babylonian captivity, with those works which had once influenced their poetry. Although the gold-plated pillars set up by the judges, the oxen of molten gold upon the heights, and the brazen serpent which was still in the Temple of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah, had been broken up and melted, yet the writers of that period could no longer emancipate themselves from the formidable composite forms of Mesopotamian art. These influenced Ezekiel's vision of the Temple that was to be built anew, and the compilers of the Hexateuch employed them to adorn the movable tent of the wilderness. Henceforth they were the only forms to retain the meaning which they had when originally borrowed, at a time when all other images mentioned in the ancient books had been interpreted as idols, and consequently condemned.

* Gen. xi. 3-8.

The prophets had long ago cried woe to all who made images of the divinity: "Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb tones, Arise, it shall teach; Behold it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it";* finally in the seventh century they had prevailed. At the same time, however, that the Jews had banished all images save the Cherubim, a people of the West, the Hellenes, who had hitherto been satisfied with an imageless worship, began to set up statues to their gods. This was not unconnected with the art of the Jews. A neighbouring people, the Phœnicians, of like origin with the Israelites and the Jews, speaking a similar language with mere dialectic variations, of identical character and differing from them only by such peculiarities of cult and rite as are apt to engender mutual aversion between the nearly related, had already, at that time, chosen the life of travel and trade, which the Jews were to adopt only at a later period. The Jews were at that time a people of shepherds and vine dressers. The Phœnicians sold to the Greeks those wooden idols and objects of hammered metal against which the prophets of Israel had inveighed, and thus gave the impulse to a national art. The pupils soon surpassed their masters. Legend tells of a sculptor Daedalus, who had actually made the wood to awake, and statues to step from their bases. The dumb stone stood up and taught a new religion which had formative art for its foundation; and from the images plated with silver and gold there came a living breath.

Upon the images of the gods followed the representation of their deeds, and the epic poetry of the Greeks stimulated an art of pictorial narration of such fulness and perfection as had been unknown to other nations. This method of recounting a myth in pictures invaded the East with Alexander the Great, and in the Roman world spread likewise to the West. Now that in the course of a thousand years it had, as was only natural, undergone various changes in style and character it was called upon to illustrate the Bible.

At the time when the formative arts had been abandoned in Israel and Judah, they had not yet progressed so far as to illustrate myths.

---

* Habakkuk ii. 19.

They had been confined to representations of the divinity and of his surrounding hosts.

The Greeks had certainly borrowed sphinxes, minotaurs, gorgons, chimaera, and similar Asiatic compound beings such as were dear to Egyptian and ancient Oriental art and to Hebrew poetry. Scarcely had these been adopted but they were transformed into monsters, and mostly forgotten in their original form; only lovers of antiquity and learned travellers tried to interpret them on extant ancient monuments, such as the chest of Cypselus or the Amyclaean throne. The vases which now afford us full insight into that period of Greek civilisation which witnessed the transformation of the forms borrowed from Asia, were still hidden in the graves. Thus, in the fourth century of our era, even had the wish been there, it would not have been possible to illustrate the Bible in the spirit of its authors, because the necessary models were wanting or too hidden; but no one even dreamt of employing any other method for illustrating the Bible but the one they were familiar with. The oldest extant connected illustrations to the Bible, probably as old as the fifth century, are afforded by the Book of Genesis in the Royal Library at Vienna.* This manuscript gives in selections, the substantial contents of the first Book of Moses, and on each page below the text it displays a beautifully executed picture. On the very second page for instance, we see the Cherub at the gate of Paradise who is so often described in the Bible, in the strange, fourfold animal form, in which he also appears in the temple; but in our Genesis his form is quite uninfluenced by all these descriptions, and he is represented as a winged boy, resembling somewhat the familiar figure of Victory.† On a later page, again, the fountain, at which Rebecca gives Eleazar to drink, is, according to classical custom, represented as a living maiden leaning upon an urn.

So long as Christianity was confined to Jews and Syrians, there was no necessity to furnish the Bible with pictures; people imagined for themselves the sacred events of the Bible on the analogy of their surroundings, just as they would events happening to their neighbours, without any desire to illustrate them. But now the Bible had passed from the people who were poorest in art forms to those that were the richest, at a time, however, when even the pictorial imagination of the latter was on the point of exhaustion. If we wish to apprehend the nature of these illustrations to the Bible we shall first have to inquire into their method of narration, and this method we shall find to be no longer that of ancient Greek art.

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* [*Die Wiener Genesis*, herausgegeben von Wilhelm, Ritter von Hartel und Franz Wickhoff, Vienna, 1895. See also the engravings by F. Sadler in Lambecius, *Commentarii de Augustissima Bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonensi*, Vienna, 1675–1679; re engraved by Anton Schlecter for the new edition of Lambecius by A. F. Kollar, Vienna, 1776–1782. See Author's Preface.—Ed.]

† Fig. 2.

This method of narration is very remarkable; it differs also completely from the method to which we are accustomed in the art of our own day. No decisive moment is chosen uniting the most important personages in the text in one common action of consequence, in order to show them to us in a second picture in another equally striking situation, whilst, in a third and in a fourth, scenes deliberately chosen carry on the narrative. It is not a case in which chosen pictures of striking, epoch-making moments combine in a cycle, in order to emulate the fluent continuous recital of the ancient myths, but as the text flows on the heroes of the narrative accompany it in a continuous series of related circumstances passing, smoothly and unbroken, one into another, just as during a river voyage the landscape of the banks seems to glide before our eyes.

Let us again take as an example a page of the same book of Genesis. The very first illustration* shows us Adam and Eve at the moment when the woman is in the act of offering him the apple; then the two bowed down by the shame of the sin they recognise. We see how they conceal themselves in the bush, while the hand reaching out of the clouds indicates the Lord who demands vengeance. The whole is set in a landscape without any division of scenes, so that our first parents appear three times within the same boundary lines and on the same ground, first facing one another at the moment of the fall, next hurrying to the bush, and finally cowering among its branches in order to conceal themselves from God. The narrative proceeds similarly on the next page.† Adam and Eve approach in abject

* Fig. 1. † Fig. 2.

humiliation the gate of the beautiful garden; we again see them outside, received by a deeply significant figure symbolising the bitter days in store for them, and between stands the guarding Cherub before the fateful gate. We thus take in at a glance their last moments in Paradise, their new misery, and the impossibility of return. Nowhere is there a trace of that selection of the pregnant moment which, according to the æsthetic principles of the eighteenth century, should characterise pictorial narration. Just and unjust pass before us in two, three, or even four representations, if necessary upon the same scene, untroubled by the law of experience that only those events can be seen together which occur at the same time; and, therefore, that it is impossible for one and the same person to be seen several times at the same moment within the same space.

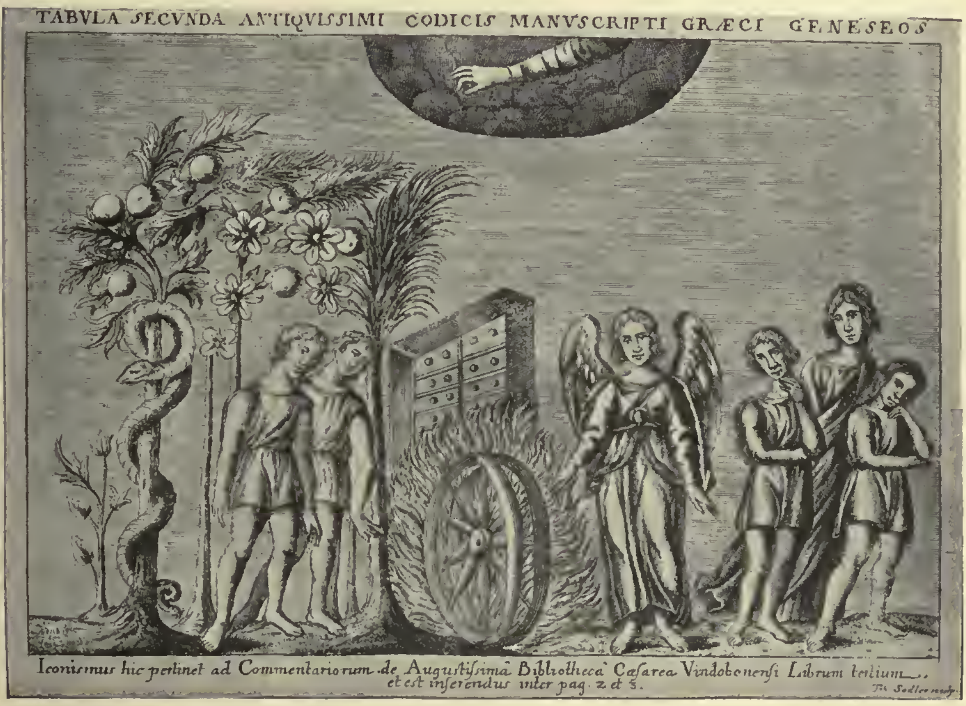
TABVLA ſECVNDA ANTIQVIſSIMI CODICIſ MANVſCRIPTI GRÆCI GENEſEOS
Iconiſmus hic pertinet ad Commentariorum de Auguſtiſsimâ Bibliothecâ Cæſarea Vindobonenſi Librum tertium, et eſt inſerendus inter pag. 2 et 3.

FIG. 2.—The Expulsion from Paradise. From the Book of Genesis in Vienna (after Lambecius)

This method of narration is not confined to early Christian art. It is equally characteristic of the last efforts of pagan art. I need only point to the sarcophagi in order to show how general this method of narration was in the declining period of antiquity: Selene alights from her chariot to kiss the beloved sleeper, and close by she has mounted the chariot again for departure.* And, indeed, art has no better means of bringing the fugitive character of the nocturnal visit so clearly before our eyes. The descriptions of pictures by the Elder Philostratos in the third century A.D. show that the painters of mythological scenes at that time proceeded on the same lines as the stone masons of the sarcophagi. Because in his descriptions the same personage appears twice or three times in the same scene, it has been questioned whether he could be describing real pictures, for people argue in the dusk of theory concerning the possibility of such a mode of composition without observing the countless monuments which prove its frequency. More than a hundred years ago Torkel Baden had already answered this objection by pointing to Michel Angelo. He had seen, he said, in the gallery at Vienna, a picture showing Jesus on the Mount of Olives, and close by Jesus again, turning round to rebuke the sleeping disciples (Fig. 3).†

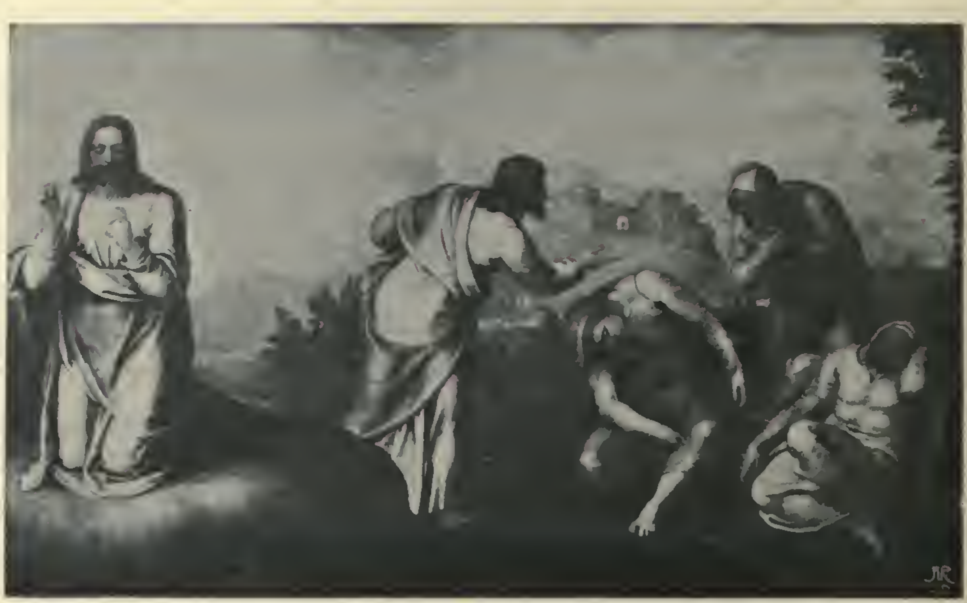

FIG. 3.—Christ on the Mount of Olives. From the picture (after Michel Angelo) in Vienna

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* *E.g.*, Matz-Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, 2727, II. p. 195 (sarcophagus in Palazzo Rospigliosi).

† Torkel Baden, *De arte ac indicio Fl. Philostratis in describendis imaginibus*, Hafniae, 1792, p. 36.

It is a superb composition, which Michel Angelo himself prized highly; after his death his nephew Leonardo gave the drawing to the Duke Cosimo de' Medici;* and it is still preserved in the collection of the Uffizi.† Michel Angelo did not invent this motive, but, as was rarely the case with him, he transformed anew an extant type. In the oldest existing representation of this scene, that, namely, in the *Evangeliarium* at Rossano of the sixth century, we see on the top of the Mount of Olives, on the right, the Lord bowed down in prayer, and then again when He has risen to admonish the sleeping disciples (Fig. 4).‡

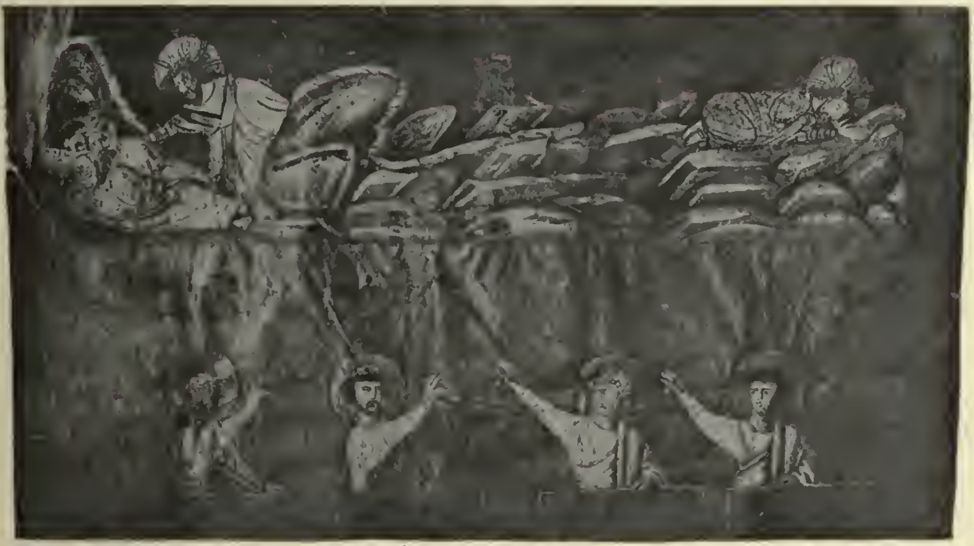

FIG. 4.—Christ on the Mount of Olives. From an *Evangeliarium* at Rossano

The *continuous* method of representation had thus been retained for this one scene during a thousand years, and the greatest master of the grand style of Italian art knew of nothing better to put in its place. But that Mount of Olives is only a typical example. On the ceiling of the

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* Vasari ed. Gaëtano Milanesi, VII. p. 272.

† Categoria "figura" Scuola Fiorentina, Cartone 41, No. 230; not exhibited. It is by Michel Angelo's own hand. The picture in Vienna is one of the not uncommon copies by another hand. [There is another replica in the Doria Gallery, No. 109.—ED.]

‡ O. von Gebhardt und A. Harnack, *Evangeliorum Codex graecus purpureus Rossanensis*, Leipzig, 1880, pl. xi. [Since the above was written the *Evangeliarium* has been magnificently reproduced by Dr. Haseloff: *Codex purpureus Rossanensis herausgegeben von Arthur Haseloff*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1898. Our Fig. 4 is reproduced, by kind permission of the editor and his publishers, from plate 8 (= fol. iv*b* of the manuscript) of this work.—ED.]

Sixtine Chapel Michel Angelo proceeded in the same way as the humble illustrator of the Vienna Book of Genesis, when he makes the form of God the Father as He sweeps through the heavens appear twice on the same picture, once borne in triumph by angels in order to separate light from darkness, and again as He floats away to new deeds of creation.

We observe, then, for the first time upon Roman sculptures of the first century a method of pictorial narration which has now grown strange to us. Thence it passed to Christian art, where it lasts up to the sixth century; it finds later on in Michel Angelo an inspired adept, is employed by Raphael in his "Release of Peter," and is then lost shortly afterwards, to reappear only at intervals during the last three centuries.

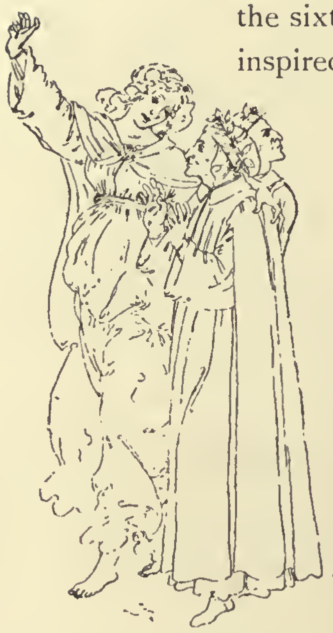

FIG. 5.—Dante. From a drawing by Botticelli to the *Paradiso*

One might imagine that this method had been purposely invented for the illustration of manuscripts; so much better adapted is it than any other to accompany each text and to conform to it; but it is older than any illustrated codex. Later it degenerated in manuscripts, where it finally issued in monstrous images. The miniatures of the German code of law in the fourteenth century represent the enthroned magistrate with two pairs of hands gesticulating to either side, in order to indicate the lively intercourse of the judge with the several parties, as he turns now to the right and now to the left. The continuous method, then, through its principle of repetition, degenerated into abnormal images, which can yet powerfully impress the popular imagination. Quite independently, a century later, it led into a similar aberration Sandro Botticelli, the most poetically endowed artist of Italy who ever illustrated a book. In his illustrations to the *Divina Comedia*, when he wished to show how Dante in presence of the happy souls in the moon takes them for reflections in a mirror, and turns his head round to discover the realities, but seeing nothing, turns quickly back again to the moon,*

* Paradiso III. 5, 19-22.

Botticelli indicated the swift movement by giving the poet two heads, with as little regard for reality as the illustrators of the ancient code of Saxon law (Fig. 5).*

This continuous method of composition lasted for fifteen centuries. It had been unknown to the great period of classical antiquity. We are only prevented from calling it simply the modern method, by the fact that during the last three centuries it again became distinct from an older method which gives striking scenes either separately or else side by side, but divided by framework. This *isolating* method of narration was at one time, if not entirely suppressed by the *continuous* method, at any rate relegated to the second place for a century and a half.

In spite of the varied means of expression at its disposal, pictorial art has only three ways of telling a story: in addition to the *continuous* and *isolating* methods there is yet a third with which, as the oldest of the three, all historical art sets out. Since, without repetition of the *dramatis personæ*, it aims at the complete expression of everything that happens before or after the central event, or that concerns the subject matter, we propose to call it the *complementary* method. One example will make its character clear. We will select it from an early period of Greek art. Kleitias, the painter of the so-called François Vase, wants to represent the death of Troilus the son of Priam.† He had ridden out of the town to water his horses, accompanying his sister who went to fetch water, for which reason the painter first places before our eyes the fountain with the people busy round it. In front Achilles with lifted spear springs upon the boy on horseback, and as pledges of his success we behold the divine presence of his mother Thetis, of Hermes, and of his protectress Athena. Although the murder has not yet taken place, Kleitias arranges all its consequences without a break. Here Polyxena and Antenor hurry to announce the murder to Priam, who is sitting in front of the city gate, and already Hector and Polites, sent by the King, are striding out of the gate to avenge the murder;

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* F. Lippman, *Zeichnungen von Sandro Botticelli zu Dante's Divina Comedia*, pl. III. of the Paradiso. [Fig. 5 is taken, by permission, from the English edition (1895) of this work.—Ed.]

† [*Wiener Vorlegeblätter für archäologische Uebungen*, 1888 (New Series), plate II., from which our Fig. 6 is taken, by permission of Professor Benndorf.—Ed.]

but on the other side Apollo approaches angrily because the murder has taken place at a spot sacred to himself. Everything relating to the death of Troilus must be fully seen, and all its successive consequences completely taken in at a glance. In fact, in order to bring out the totality of the event in question we are shown its preparatory stages as if by a retrogression from the main point.

This, therefore, no less than the *continuous* method, is at variance with experience, which teaches that only simultaneous occurrences can be seen at the same time, only it makes greater demands upon the imagination of the spectator. It was not discovered by the Greeks; it already dominated ancient Egyptian and Oriental art whence the Greeks learnt it. A precious example is the Homeric description of the shield of Achilles. Its reliefs too belong to the *complementary* style, but in its more ancient phase, when it did not yet aim at representing myths.*

The *isolating* method of narration, which is the one exclusively in vogue nowadays, developed out of the *complementary* method, just as the drama grew out of the epic. We have, then, the terse *isolating* method bounded on both sides by looser methods of narration, each of which, however, adopts a different means of expression.

It is easy to see how the abundance of episode, which the *complementary* style brings into one frame, tends to fall, as art develops, into separate scenes of which only the striking moments are then chosen for representation; but it is difficult to discover why those dramatic single scenes were again compressed into one picture in which the hero, turning hither and thither, enacts the whole tragedy before us at one and the same time. While the *complementary* method of narration

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* Isolated examples of the *continuous* method already occur in pre-Hellenic Oriental art. The way to it from the *complementary* method was not difficult to discover, given that the hero of the story was represented anew in each of the minor scenes brought in to supplement the main scene. The silver cup from Palestrina in the Museo Kircheriano at Rome (Helbig, *Collections of Antiquities in Rome*, II. p. 450) illustrating the adventures in the chase, of a legendary king from the Assyrian or Phœnico-Cypriote cycle of legends, affords an example of the *continuous* method of representation from the seventh century B.C. Yet at that time the *continuous* method was only employed in isolated instances, and was not adopted by Hellenic art; the latter was influenced solely by the *complementary* representations of ancient Oriental art.

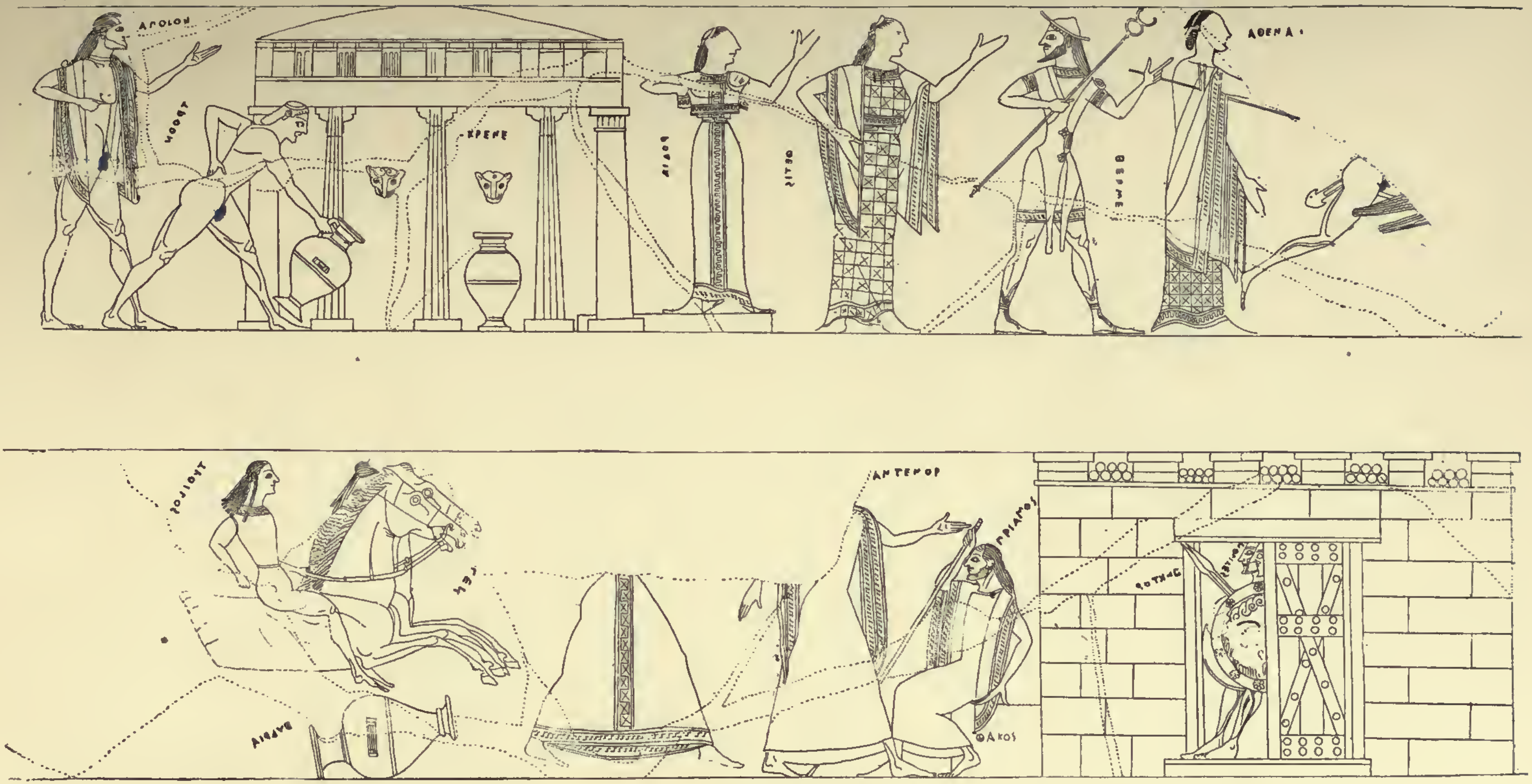
ΑΠΟΛΟΝ
ΚΡΕΝΕ
ΑΘΕΝΑ
ΑΝΤΕΝΟΡ
ΘΑΚΟΣ

FIG. 6.—The Death of Troilos. From the François vase; Florence (after *Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, 1888, plate II.)

was borrowed from Asiatic art and the *isolating* method is purely Hellenic, the *continuous* style can no longer be comprehended within the general conception of Hellenism. For although its advent was plentifully prepared,* it was not till the second century of the Roman Empire that it finally emerges as an independent style spreading notably in that direction in which its dependence upon its point of origin is most clear. That is no longer a *Hellenistic* but a *Roman* method of narration.

Our theory of the rise of a new style of pictorial narration in the second century B.C. ill accords with the oft-repeated assumption that Roman art borrowed from the Hellenistic its formal means of expression as well as its imaginative content—at the most coarsening these—so that all development ceased in the Roman school of sculpture and painting, and this unbroken course of imitation issued at last in complete technical exhaustion.

This assumption of a standstill in artistic development for four centuries is, however, at variance with every historical experience, and is in itself a surprising anomaly which never repeated itself either before or after. Further, it is proved impossible by the fact that a

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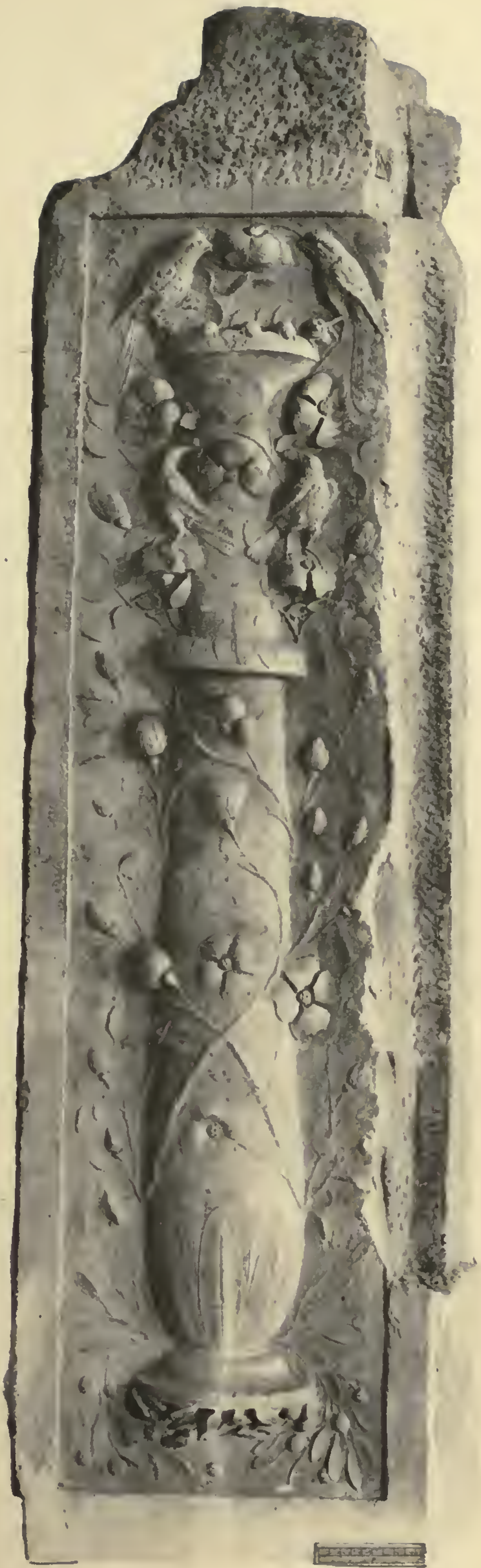
* In Greek art we find several instances which, upon superficial observation, would seem to point to an early rise of the *continuous* style. For instance, on the red-figured cylices with the adventures of Theseus, the adventures of the hero are not divided off from one another; he reappears in each scene, and the personages represented in the one scene actually overlap at the edges the personages of the next scene (*cf.* K. Friedrichs, *Die Philostratischen Bilder*, Erlangen, 1860 p. 103). For all that, these cylices belong to the *isolating* style; we have single, isolated moments from the life of Theseus. It is by no means intended to show a continuous series, correlated in time, as if Theseus after slaying the one monster turned round to fight the next. The so-called Homeric cups, likewise, where the interrelation of the scenes is the same as in the cylices with the adventures of Theseus, bear only a superficial resemblance to the *continuous* method. Still nearer to the *continuous style* comes the small frieze from Pergamon (*cf.* C. Robert, Beiträge zur Erklärung des Pergamenischen Telephos frieses, *Jahrbuch des Arch. Instituts*, II. and III.: especially III., p. 95 *ff*). Here we have separate scenes from the life of the hero, represented, seemingly at least, against an unbroken background of landscape and architecture; yet here again these scenes do not follow continuously upon one another, as in the pictures of Philostratus, on the sarcophagi, or in the pictures of the Genesis, but each constitutes in itself an isolated event from the life of the legendary hero. It should not surprise us to find this *pseudo-continuous* style making its appearance again, especially upon sarcophagi, at a time when the genuine *continuous* style was holding the field; for the supremacy of this style simply compelled all cycles, which did not exactly adapt themselves to its character, to put in at any rate a sort of superficial conformity to it.



PILASTER FROM TOMB OF THE HATERII.

(Lateran.)

Plate VIII.

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UNIVERSITY
OF
CALIFORNIA

new architectural style arose precisely during the Roman Empire. Every product of Egyptian, Oriental, and Greek architecture appears as child's play by the side of the fully developed Roman arch. Already the cupola of the Pantheon, built under Hadrian, hangs in classical perfection above the wide supporting space; and although its beauty was unsurpassable, yet the numberless subdivisions of the Roman Thermæ continually invited increasingly bold developments of arched constructions till at last, in the basilica of Constantine, the problem of how to span a triple nave was solved—as regards breadth and spatial effect and boldness of construction—with a vigour and intelligence unsurpassed even by the builders of mediæval cathedrals. I fully agree with the modern critic who writes: "There was in the antique art of the Roman Empire a development along the ascending line, and not merely a decadence as is universally believed. In support of the latter contention people too readily compare the weak contemporary reliefs of the Arch of Constantine with those taken from the Arch of Trajan, forgetting that it was that same age of Constantine which saw the first example of a vaulted basilica. The problem which kept the whole mediæval architecture of the West in breathless effort had already been solved on the most monumental plan at the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era." *

This development of the vaulted style of architecture lasted from the second century A.D., throughout the Middle Ages, with their attempted solutions of the problem in the Romanesque and Gothic style, up to the sixteenth century, when Michel Angelo's plan for the cupola of St. Peter gives the final solution, with which the task is allowed to rest. Is it pure coincidence that these are the same fifteen centuries which were dominated by the problem of the *continuous* style? Or have we here a consistent period of art offering parallel phenomena in architecture, sculpture, and painting?

One merit has never been denied to Roman art, and that is the excellence of its portraiture. Who has not seen, in collections of antiques, heads from the period of Vespasian to Trajan, whose striking lifelikeness and apparently superficial technique, adopted for a distinct purpose, put one in mind of the best portraits of Velasquez and of Franz Hals? Who has not realised as the processions of the Arch of Titus appear to glide by him, or as the battle from the Forum of Trajan * surges before his eyes, that he is standing before products of a new art, which at the most has only a loose connection with that of Greece?

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* Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen*, Berlin, 1893, p. 272.

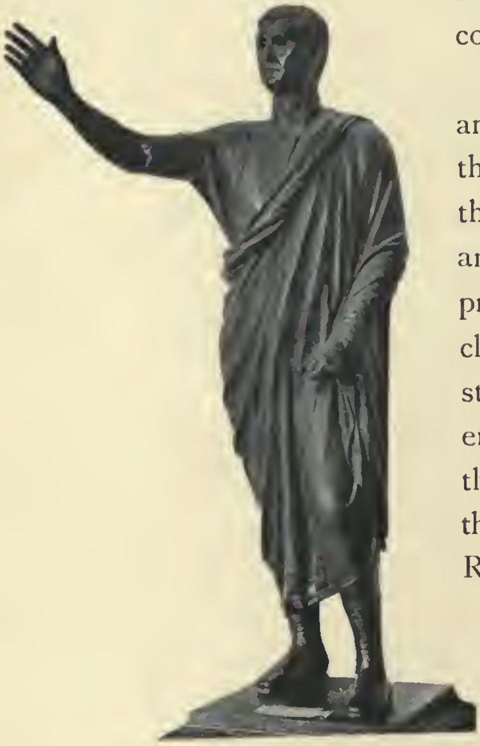
FIG. 7.—Roman Portrait Statue in Bronze (Florence) (Photograph Alinari)

Notwithstanding the fact that single motives and figures are borrowed from Greek art, all this puts us in mind more of modern works—the Venetians, the Flemings, the Spaniards, and the modern French—than of the baroque products of the Hellenistic period which come closer in point of time; for the very circumstance that such motives and figures are here employed with a new purpose only intensifies their distinctly modern impression, somewhat as the figures from the old Italian masters which Rembrandt took into his compositions.

Not only is there a resemblance in these reliefs and statues and busts to pictures by Rubens, Hals, and Velasquez, but the style is actually the same and the same means of expression are employed in both cases. It is that *illusionist style* which reached in the second and third centuries A.D. its first highest embodiment such as it was not to find again before the seventeenth century. Granting that the purpose of all art is to produce illusion and that all that the naïve spectator observes, from the earliest attempts to the highest perfection of art, is the illusionist copy of reality, nevertheless the way in which this illusion is contrived at different times denotes a generic difference in the arts. The more ancient strives to obtain its effect through the rendering of what is organic and essential in the person or object represented, and when it degenerates this is owing to stylistic alteration of the true forms into exaggerations of what seem the essential forms.

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* Now arranged in four divisions on the Arch of Constantine (see below, Fig. 42).

Modern art selects out of the mass of the reality only those elements which are suited to convey the lifelike impression of an appearance at a given moment. These are not two methods of art of which the one could, so to speak, easily develop out of the other. They are distinguished not only by the means they employ but also by a radical difference in the conception of art.

The Roman portraits are not the oldest which make this striking impression. A recent subtle critic in describing the collection of the Museo Gregoriano says of the Etruscan heads in terra cotta and nenfro preserved there: "They are of different dates and of very unequal execution; but nearly all show a lively appreciation of individual peculiarities, which are so naturalistically reproduced that many of these faces seem like modern portraits."* No one would assert this of contemporary Greek portraits. In spite of any naturalness these are always characterised by the effort to realise a type, which makes any comparison with the individuality of modern portraiture impossible.

The typical, then, it is, that separates Greek from Etruscan art. The latter was generally dull and lifeless when, in compliance with the fashion of the Hellenistic period, it tried to imitate Greek models. But when Etruscan art ignored models, and applied itself simply to the copy of nature, it prepared the way for the highest achievements of Western art. The art of the East strives from the individual phenomenon to the type, and Greek sculpture shows the realisation of this effort. Western art, on the other hand, always strives to work back again from the type as it arises involuntarily, to the individual phenomenon. The Greek artist, indeed, like the modern, can only progress further by continually making new observations in nature, whence he brings new details into his work. But these do not help him to separate and isolate the individual; they are simply brought in to build up a new type. Even portraiture allows the dominating type of the period to pierce through the individual features. Quite the reverse is the case of the Western artist. Though the exigencies of cult, the reverence paid to certain images, the convenience of imitation, and whatever else flows from the ethical and material conditions of art all conduce to the formation of a type, yet the Western artist strives in spite of all to individualise the type over again in each single instance. Thus it is that, although the Virgin Mary was during centuries represented thousands and thousands of times, each painter of the West strove to give her a different form in every one of his pictures. Where we find anything that looks like a type, it is because the Byzantines, who were the true successors of the Greeks, had in early times found a type for the Blessed Virgin also, which strayed for a time into the West.

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* E. Reisch, *apud* Helbig, *Collections of Antiquities in Rome*, translation Muirhead, II. p. 266.

When once the art that creates types and the art that aims at individualising have come into contact, the whole subsequent history of art becomes a record of how in times of decline or in times of exuberance the discarded type comes once more to the front—a process which is termed *classicising*—and dominates till these post-classics are each time in their turn swept away by original national artists.

And in this respect all nations and all schools of modern art, however much they may differ otherwise, form a unity: that Western effort towards depicting the individual which already distinguishes Etruscan art binds them together; the path they trod was always one and the same, till they reached the goal of perfect illusion.

These two principles had first met in Etruscan art; but they stood towards one another as oil and water poured into one glass, without intermingling. In the Roman period, however, the *illusionist* principle had forced its growth into the old art of types, had soon overshadowed it, and finally won the day. When, then, after its complete triumph, we observe a new method of narration in the formative arts which at times obtains even in the East, we cannot resist asking whether there may not be a connection—whether, in a word, the *continuous* method of narration may not be precisely one result of the *illusionist* style.

There can be no doubt as to the connection in point of time. When the illusionist style was fully matured in Rome, there developed out of Roman art the peculiar method of narration of which early

Christian art offers so many examples, and the inquiry into the peculiarities of style of early Christian painting is actually of parallel import with the inquiry into the origin and development of an Imperial Roman art. It is a question the answer to which is so difficult, and which presents itself in so scattered a manner, owing to the almost total absence of any preparatory works on the subject, that it would be presumptuous even to attempt to answer it in its whole compass. It will be something if we succeed in formulating the problem correctly, and in inviting solutions.

Out of our speculations concerning the new imaginative world into which the old books of the Jews found themselves transported, and the peculiarities of the method of pictorial narration adopted by late antique art, as well as concerning the triumph of Western over Eastern art, three questions arise which we will answer in the reverse order to that in which they have presented themselves :

How and when was a *Roman* art developed ?

How is the *continuous* method of narration its result ?

And under what circumstances was this method adopted for Christian representations ?

As from the nature of the extant monuments and the state of tradition our only hope of being able to answer these questions—the two first at least — lies in an inquiry into Roman ~~sculpture,~~ our first business must be to understand the rise of a Roman school of sculpture. If, then, there was a school which could really be called Roman, we shall in the second place have to describe the nature of its narrative reliefs, and then only shall we be able to examine the indications which allow us to assume a parallel development for painting. For, though every history of ancient art, owing to the numberless gaps, often impossible to fill, in the extant material, and the fragmentary character of tradition, can only be symptomatic, this is above all the case with the history of ancient painting. If, finally, we wish further to examine more closely the circumstances under which Roman sculpture and painting were adopted by Christianity, we shall then only need to trace the rise of illustrated Christian manuscripts, and to observe the place they occupy in the history of art.

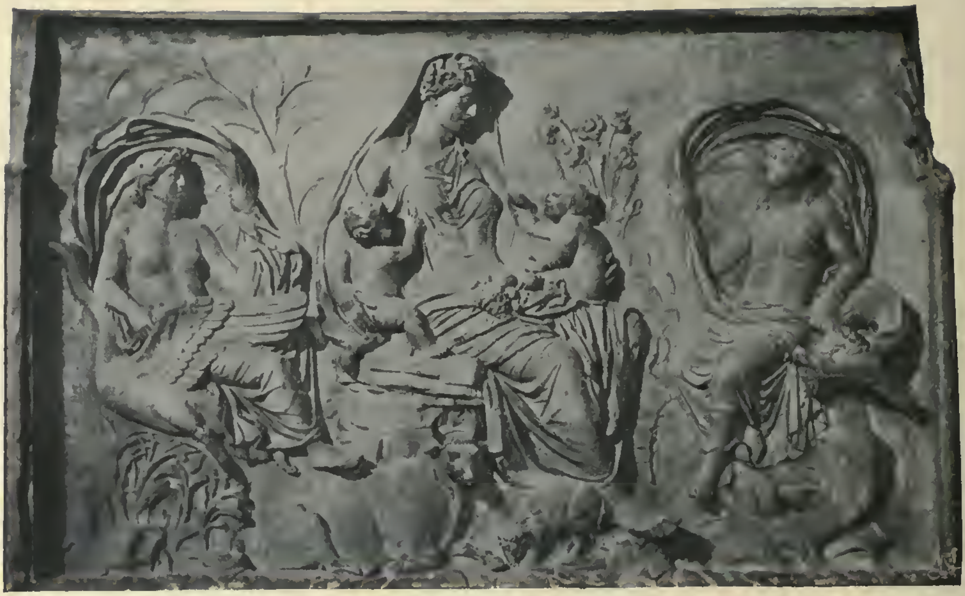

FIG. 8.—Allegorical Relief from the *Ara Pacis* of Augustus, Florence (Photograph Alinari)

II

SCHOLARS are far too ready to persuade us that literature and art developed in ascending and descending straight lines, which they respectively qualify as good and bad, while it is for them to dream on the summit of the pyramid, from which they are amiable enough to bestow the well-earned crown, now on Sophocles, now on Pheidias, as the case may be. We should rather compare the growth of poetry and of art to one of those beautiful Greek acanthus stems, which puts forth a shoot that, involved in itself, hides a glorious blossom within, then sinks to earth, but only to lift its head again and begin anew its superb undulation; while, now above and now below, there shoot forth little twigs that break in upon the ordered alternation. Great artists of original temper check this effort, for by suppressing the shy attempts at originality in succeeding generations they compel a continuous imitation, through which art sinks to uniformity and insipidity, till by degrees fresh sprouts make their appearance, which again may develop into new individualities.

Thus, from the comparative point of view, Pheidias or Praxiteles can no longer stand upon that solitary height where the first has been placed by the sentimental pedants of to-day, and the latter by those of antiquity, but they indicate the high water-mark in a wavelike movement, which did not come to a standstill even when the great artists of the fourth century had created their new types of the gods. Out of those forms in their radiant youth there finally develops a style of charming regularity, which is to-day the ideal of all youthful archæological work.

No one dares to print a dissertation which does not lead to the same result—namely, that the work of art in question, be it ever so late, if it does not go back directly to an original of the fourth century, can at least be attributed to some influence of that time. This system has come to act like a sort of patent of nobility, whereby later statues are subsequently ennobled, as though Greek art had not continued for centuries capable of new creations. In most cases, however, it is not of the slightest consequence when a motive occurs for the first time. Art is as lavish with her motives as nature with her germs. But, just as out of thousands upon thousands of scattered seeds only one grows to a spreading oak, so do myriads of motives vanish, all except the one out of which a powerful individuality created a new art type.

It may be agreeable to succeed in fixing the age of the motive; but to date back to the fourth century the origin of nearly every art form from the period of the Diadochi up to the end of the Roman Empire, which happens to please the writer who describes it, is a random proceeding calculated to impede the true understanding of development.

After the pleasant but superficial art of the Diadochi, there arise at the end of the third century sculptors of the first rank full of passionate vigour, whose creations, even though we cannot name their authors, yield nothing in absolute worth to the masterpieces of the great artists of the fifth and of the fourth century. I need only name the Pasquino, the Barberini Faun, and the Dying Gaul, in order to recall by means of the current appellations under which they have become famous, how these statues have been for centuries the admiration of intelligent artists and critics. Never has searching pathos been so intimately pervaded by the tenderest feeling for nature, or, in a style equally removed from affectation and from mechanical realism, produced forms which in boldness of movement and in pulsating life even appear to surpass her.

It is granted to art as little as to man to enjoy for long the perfect equipoise of all its powers. In this noble style of tragic stress and struggle were already combined the elements which were hideously to deform it as soon as it grew to exuberance under the hands of imitators. The passionate action degenerated into the theatrical; the lifelike rendering of the forms of nature became mere *bravura*. We already find this style flaccid and over-blown in the frieze of the giants of the Pergamene altar, till at last in the Laocoon it issues in a soulless artificiality.

The Farnese Bull, a coarse tragi-comedy, probably contemporary with the Laocoon of the year 100 B.C., was unintentionally criticised by the modellers of the eighteenth century when they naïvely adapted its clever construction, not, however, to give the extract of a tragedy for garden sculptures, but to construct porcelain groups of shepherds and shepherdesses engaged in graceful gallantry. The Bull was the suitable model for this style of decoration. Together with the Laocoon it stands at the end of a development of the baroque at a point where, as under similar circumstances in the eighteenth century, a reaction was inevitable. In the later, as in the earlier century temperance followed upon intoxication. In a city of luxury like Alexandria the reaction seems to have proceeded rapidly and sobriety to have immediately become the fashion. Nothing can be more colourless or insignificant than the portraits of the last Ptolemies on their coins, or the miserable stiff eagles of the reverse. A polished technique and a painstaking execution take the place of invention and movement. Let us glance for a moment at the form of the folds on the Portland vase:* the garments, rendered without observation of nature and even inaccurately, are yet painstakingly drawn, and the meaningless air of the figures is

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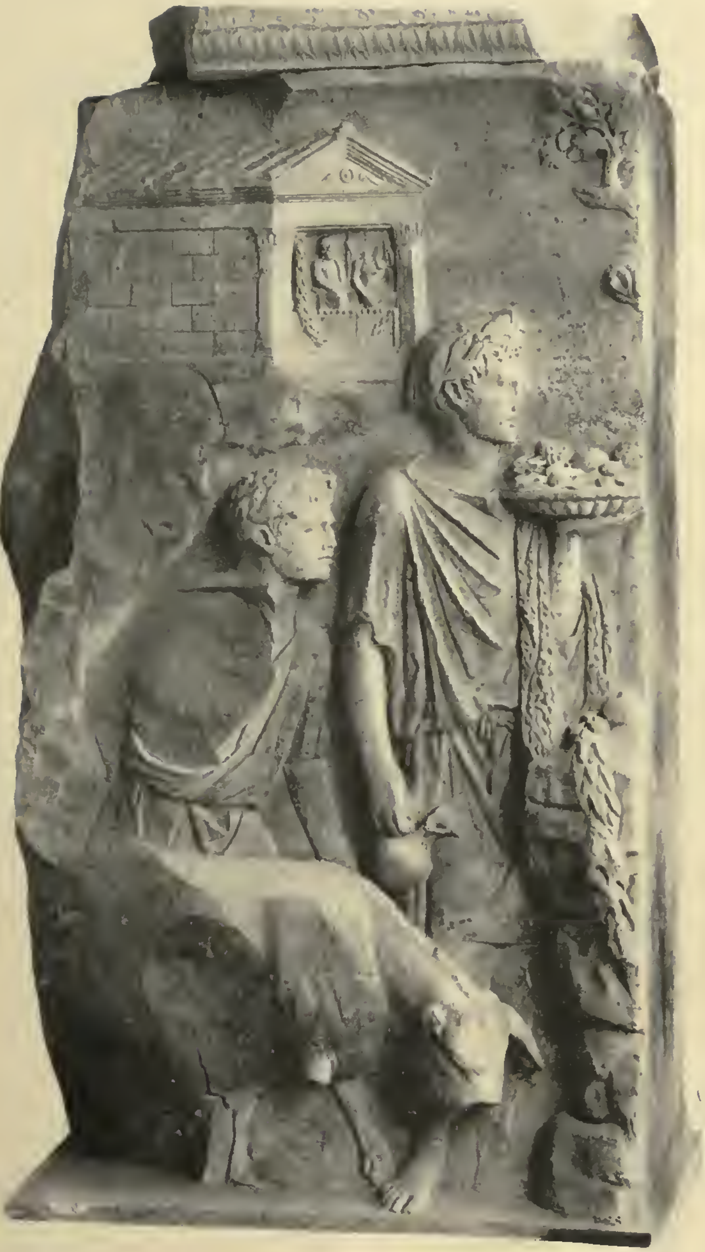
* In the gem-room of the British Museum. This vase was correctly assigned by Fröhner, *La Verrerie Antique*, 1879, p. 84, f., to Egypt, towards the close of the Ptolemaic rule.



RELIEF FROM THE ARA PACIS.

(Museo delle Terme.)

Plate II.

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a consequence of the taste of the time, which did not permit any telling or expressive gestures. That is exactly the Alexandrian "Empire" style, which we find again in the Pompeian pictures framed by Egyptianising ornaments. Two of the cups from Bernays, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, which stand out distinct from the rest—with poets or philosophers grouped four times with an *Inspiratrix**—show the style still further developed. The fluttering garments have already become purely conventional ornaments which aim at improving upon nature by a stiff elegance. Thus impoverished, Greek art found itself in Rome, which may be looked upon as the last of the Hellenistic art centres, face to face with new tasks. Indeed, in Rome, up to the first century B.C., art had only been occasionally called in, and there could be no question of a regular development.

Now, however, portraits, chiefly busts in which the Romans, inspired by the Etruscans, had always taken pleasure, were ordered in numbers from the Greek artists. These busts now took their place by the side of the old native wax images, which they were to supplement and eventually to supplant.

At first the Greeks were unable to compete with the realistic effects of Etruscan portraiture, even when these were attained by the simplest methods. Nothing was further removed from their artistic creativeness at that time than striking momentary effect. From the drawings of the Flemish masters, above all from Rembrandt's, we learn that some five to seven unconnected points, or short strokes, correctly placed within a general outline of the head, are sufficient to produce perfect illusion. The heads appear to live, and we should at once recognise their originals, were we to meet them in the streets; we can make the experiment daily with the drawings of contemporary artists who work in the same manner. By indicating what is peculiar to the individual in the shadows of the eyebrows, eyelids, nostrils, mouth, and chin, and sometimes by further indicating iris and pupil, they attain, provided only they place each detail in its relative light, and observe the correct proportions and distances, to a sureness of effect, which a searching drawing, that represents all the important details of the face in their connection, seldom reaches. The old Etruscan portrait heads in clay or stone are similarly worked.

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* Chabouillet, *Catalogue des camées*, etc., 2811, 2812.

The characteristic forms of the individual parts of the face, once placed in the sketchily treated head, astonish us by their resemblance when seen at the right distance. The Roman ancestral portraits must have belonged to this class of art. Here the Greeks found themselves at a loss. Even in the overblown works of their baroque period the essential in form had always remained their chief aim. They might have been capable of altering arbitrarily the separate parts which compose the face, but they never would have ceased to present them in the strictest inter-connection. So that the problem now before the Greeks in Rome was to discover a style of portraiture which should on the one hand preserve the laws of form, and on the other hand should strive in every way to attain to that resemblance which the Romans insisted upon in a quite different measure to the Greeks. The problem was a difficult one, because it was not possible to derive any assistance from the earlier styles of Greek portraiture. Archaic attempts, and generally all examples of an art still trammelled, might perhaps have afforded pleasure to a few connoisseurs, but would not satisfy the taste of a half-educated aristocracy. The somewhat bloated portraits of the Diadochi, with their heroic pose,* could not satisfy the severe elegance of the Roman nobility. What pleased the latter was the last phase, at once sober and solemn, of the Greek sculpture of the first century. This they took as the basis of their portraiture. How could Cæsar or Augustus have been represented with the drawn-up brows which the portraits of the Seleukids borrow from the Tritons? What would have been the use of models such as a Pergamene portrait head with its tangled hair and artificially genial expression? It would have seemed unbecoming and stagey. Even the lion glance of Alexander would have been judged too theatrical.

These artists soon discovered the right means. They gave an exact reproduction of nature, but with a terseness which produced the desired impression of cold distinction. The head of the boy Augustus found at Ostia, which is reproduced on Plate I., as being also the portrait of the patron of all Roman art, makes words superfluous.* If we are right in estimating the age of the boy at thirteen or fourteen years this head belongs to exactly the middle of the century. We see that at that time the style was already fully developed. The head is a masterpiece of the school. The first impression is that the portrait was designed for a harder material than the marble in which it is executed. This impression fades away again in presence of any of the bronze copies of the head so frequently made in Rome nowadays for decorative purposes, because, though the head remains just as effective, it does not appear designed for the special advantages which this material offers. Finally, it becomes clear to us that the conception was not influenced by the material. It has been carefully worked out after nature in the clay, and then translated with painful accuracy into marble, without any further thought being taken of the conditions imposed by the new material. Rather might it be conjectured that the artist's familiarity with certain technical methods of the graver and the chaser had unconsciously influenced his rendering of forms. This imparts something artificial to the style and increases the effect of coldness. We might with good reason call it the *Augustan Style*, because the period of its efflorescence coincides with the lifetime of Augustus, and also because Augustus himself remains its most favourite theme.

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* [A good example of this style is the nude bronze statue in the Museo delle Terme, Helbig, *Collections of Antiquities in Rome*, 1052.—Ed.]

The statue of Augustus from the villa of Livia at Prima Porta † is about thirty years later than the portrait of him as a boy. The Emperor stands there, with his right hand raised preparatory to addressing his soldiers. The stylistic peculiarities which we noted in the head from Ostia are preserved; indeed, we can observe them still more carefully in the statue.‡ The delicate execution of the important reliefs on the breastplate have been correctly interpreted as imitations of metal work. When, however, we come to examine their treatment in particular it bears no trace of the style imposed by metal work. The reliefs correspond neither to the technique of chased work nor yet to those cast figures which are frequently riveted and soldered to similar pieces of armour. Their technique corresponds exactly to the so-called Hellenistic reliefs. "One might believe," Theodor Schreiber says of these, "the process to have been the same as in modern relief, and that the modelling was first represented upon the slate slab by means of clay introduced at discretion. For between the highest and lowest relief there occurs every intermediate gradation, there is no clear successive detachment of the different planes which rise one behind the other somewhat as in modern technique, but frequently a sudden transition from the highest to the lowest relief, and where the lowest depth does not suffice recourse is had to another process, that of graving on a flat surface."* But not only do the figures on the breastplate point to modelling in clay, but the same is evidenced by the folds of the garment, by the separate execution of the fringe, by the treatment of the hair, and, finally, by the nude, so that we have before us only the copy of a carefully executed model in clay, based in every detail upon a careful observation of nature.

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* Vatican, Hall of the Busts, 273 (Helbig, 223). Bernoulli, *Römische Iconographie* ii., 1 pl. ii.

† In the *Braccio Nuovo* of the Vatican, Helbig, 5.

‡ Ulrich Köhler, whose monograph remains the best that has been written upon the statue (*Una Statua di Cesare Augusto*, Annali, 1863, p. 437, 449), seems to assume a nearer relation than one merely of style between the head from Ostia and this statue; if I understand him correctly, his opinion is that they may both be the work of the same artist.

It has been suggested that the statue is an imitation of an Hellenistic model.† The resemblance which is pleaded to a relief from Kleitor in Arcadia is purely accidental; the motive of the commander haranguing his soldiers is directly observed. On the other hand, the proportions, the powerful breast, the sure though easy pose recall an older age of art. If we turn from the Augustus of the Braccio Nuovo to glance at the Doryphorus after Polycleitus in the same gallery, we feel convinced that we were not mistaken. The Augustus has been not imitated but inspired. It is the work of an artist to whom the statues of Polycleitus were familiar.

We are, indeed, in the midst of the great period of the copyists. The principal occupation of every Greek sculptor in Rome, or at any rate the chief business of his studio, was to copy famous Greek statues in marble. Pergamene art had approached ancient art in a different manner, and had sought to adapt the older works. Before the first century exact copies were only made occasionally for some special purpose. The exhaustion of the artistic imagination, by impelling the lover of art who was no longer satisfied with contemporary creations to seek out older works of art, favoured this extensive copying. This has been our greatest boon, since it is to these copies almost exclusively that our knowledge of the masterpieces of Greek sculpture is due.* Similarly, the interest for the history of art which these copies gave

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* Theodor Schreiber, *Die Brunnen reliefs aus Palazzo Grimani*, Leipzig, 1888.

† Helbig, *loc. cit.*

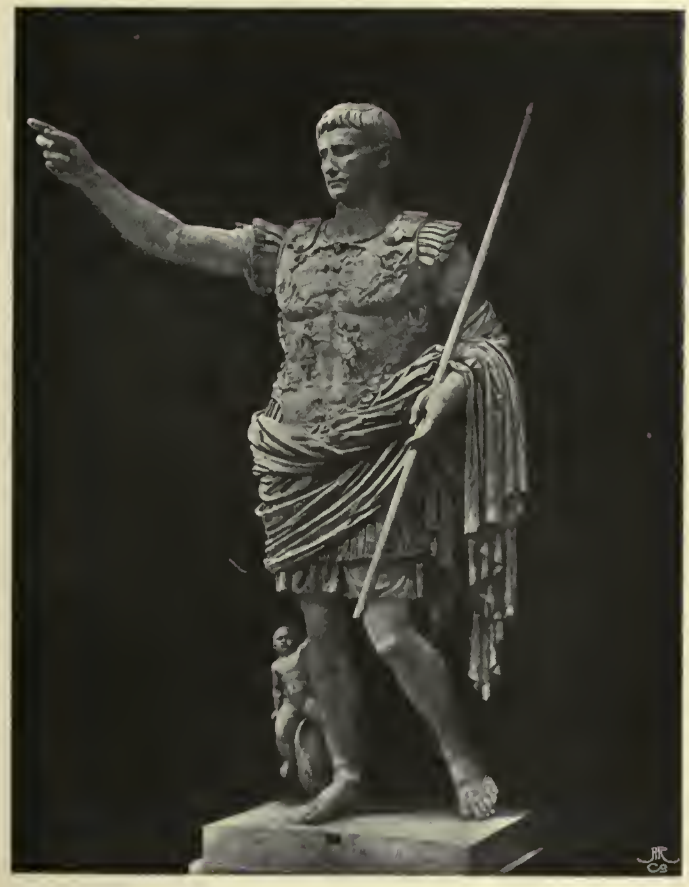
FIG. 9.—Statue of Augustus from Prima Porta
(Photograph Alinari)

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* [The best commentary to this statement is A. Furtwängler's illuminating book, *Die Meisterwerke der Griechischen Plastik*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1893; English edition by E. Sellers, London, 1895. Furtwangler's monograph: *Ueber Statuen Kopien im Alterthum*, Munich 1895, should also be consulted.—ED.]

rise to in cultured circles in Rome has preserved for us valuable connected information on the subject.

This copying led to the supremacy of the clay model in marble sculpture. The sculptors who had to produce numerous copies of famous statues which were not in Rome, or at any rate not in their workshops, required reproductions of them in clay, which they afterwards copied exactly in marble, even when the original was plated with gold or cast in bronze. Accustomed to this process, they employed it also in dealing with nature. Faithful imitation of the forms before them, and indifference towards the inner necessities imposed upon the style by the material, but which they had effaced in the transcription, became the rule also in original creations. The preference of Roman connoisseurs for the older periods of sculpture and their constrained style—a natural reaction after baroque art had ceased to please—unconsciously influenced the formation of new originals. Those simpler forms which they were daily forced to copy intelligently brought artists to look more simply at nature also, or at any rate to render it in more sharply defined forms. Similarly when the masters who were active in the study and the imitation of nature happened to have to copy in clay an archaic statue, they unconsciously gave to the only slightly articulated forms a more naturalistic rendering which afterwards passed into the marble copy. Thus Kekulé's subtle observation of the naturalistic charm of the archaic boy copied by Stephanus,*—a charm which is not in the slightest lessened because the statue has been shown to be of non-Attic origin—is best explained in this way. But in the one as in the other case all intention, even indeed any consciousness of the process, seems to me excluded. This Augustan style is a purely historical product of the conditions of the time and its art.

In the year 14 B.C., that is some ten years after the statue of the Emperor in the Villa of Livia had been set up, this Augustan style ventured upon a great monumental work which was the last example of its capabilities and marked at the same time the transition to the

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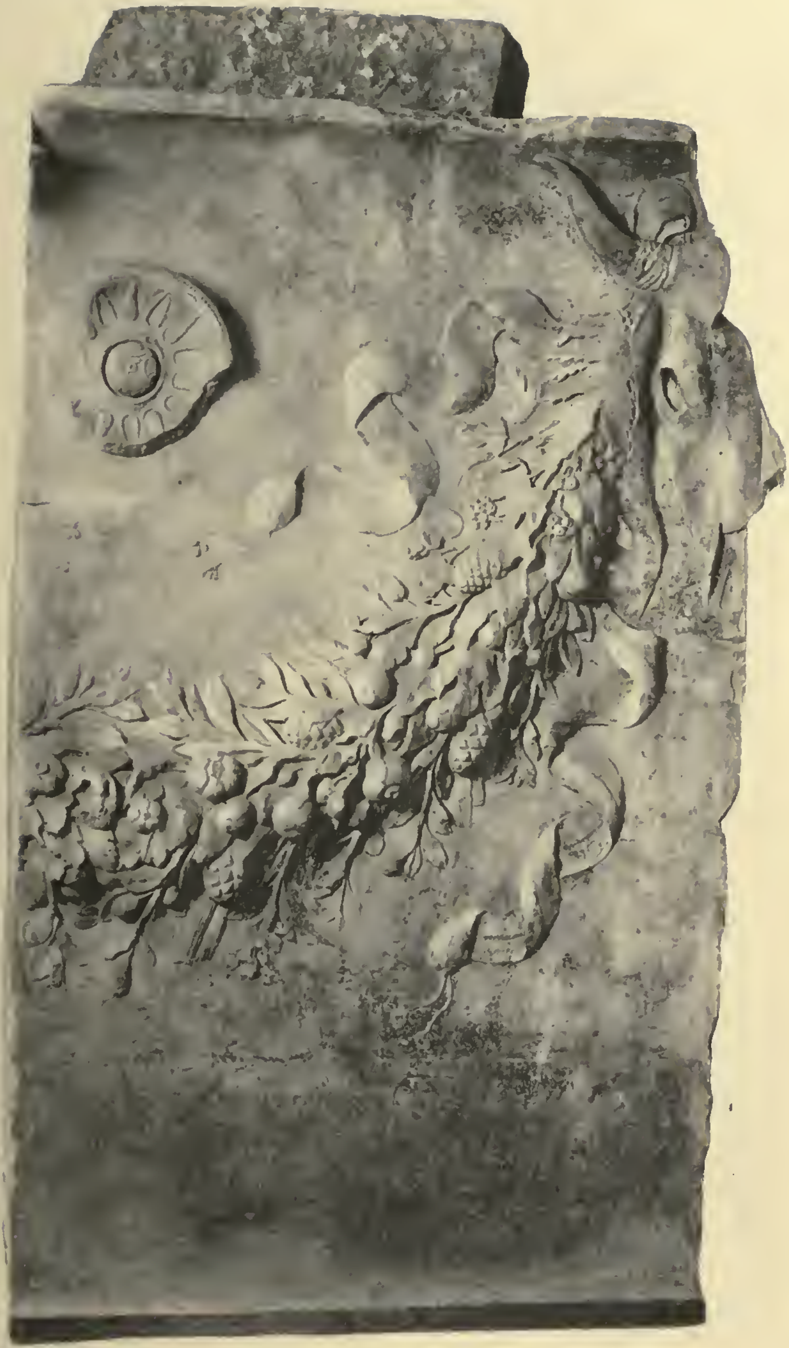
* R. Kekulé, *die Gruppe des Menelaos*, p. 21. [The statue is in the Villa Albani, Helbig, 744.—Ed.]



RELIEF FROM THE ARA PACIS.

(Museo delle Terme.)

Plate III.

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next period, dominated by the illusionist style of Roman triumphal art; not, indeed, that the artistic methods in which the coming style was to find expression were developed in this monument, but because the basis upon which that future art was to rise was here firmly established. This monument is the *Ara Pacis Augusti.*

A monumental altar had been planned, richly adorned with sculpture like the one in Pergamon, and destined to glorify the Emperor, to honour him as prince of peace—the plastic complement as it were, to the *Monumentum Ancyranum.* The manner in which the project was carried out is quite new. Nothing was further from the minds either of those who planned or those who executed the monument, than to operate through mythical parallels in the manner of the Greeks, who as late as on the Pergamene altar had symbolised the repulse of the Barbarians by the Fall of the Giants, and made the story of the hero Telephus take the place of what was native and local. The more strictly historical monuments likewise, which had been prompted by the feats of Alexander, were no longer suitable for the representation of contemporaries. The lion hunt of Alexander at Delphi by Lysippus and Leochares shows the event heroised, the king naked, with only the lion skin of Heracles fluttering at his back.* This also would have been too theatrical for Augustus. For the new enterprise, therefore, recourse was had to portraiture which, as we have seen, formed as it were the central point of the new style. The Imperial House and the highest aristocracy of Rome appear to accompany Augustus on the occasion of his first sacrifice at the altar.† We have, then, a series of historical portraits assembled for a religious ceremony. And if we study these trains of priests and officials, of proud youths, of beautiful women and well-bred children, who walk behind the Emperor in long rows, or come forward to welcome him, we must confess that there are few works of art which could have rendered with equal success the consciousness of high worth combined with elegance of deportment. It is an historical picture of the first order, which shows us the people who first conquered the world and were then governing it, united together. One feels involuntarily reminded of English portraits, and especially of those where the "Empire" style is already passing into a freer and more naturalistic mood; these only lack the processional grouping of the reliefs. It would be unfair to compare the reliefs of the *Ara* to the frieze of the Parthenon, whose unrestrained gaiety would be unseemly in this distinguished company. To the measured calm of these high personages was opposed, as an artistic counterpoise in realistic presentment, the sacrificial servants who bring the unruly beasts to the altar. It was a smaller frieze, a sort of balustrade, on whose reverse were represented beautiful garlands of fruit hanging from boukrania. A fragment of this frieze from the Palazzo Fiano in Rome, where it was found, is given

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* See Loeschcke, *Jahrbuch des Arch. Instituts*, iii. p. 189, who recognises this group upon a relief from Mantinea in the Louvre.

† It is the merit of F. von Duhn to have first recognised the connection of a series of reliefs in the Villa Medici, in the Palazzo Fiano, in the Vatican, in the Uffizi, and in the Louvre, and to have promoted their publication in the *Monumenti del Istituto archeologico* (vol. xi., plates 34-36). [For the full literature of the subject see Petersen, *Römische Miltheilungen*, 1894, p 171 ff., *ib.* 1895, p. 138 ff., who contributes a fresh discussion of the subject, and a restoration of the altar; *cf.* Amelung, *Führer durch die Antiken in Florenz*, p. 105 ff.—Ed.] Phot. Brogi, 4086-4089 of the best preserved slabs with figures; Tuminello and other Roman photographers have done the decorative slabs formerly in the Palazzo Fiano. [These have now been moved to the Museo delle Terme.—Ed.]

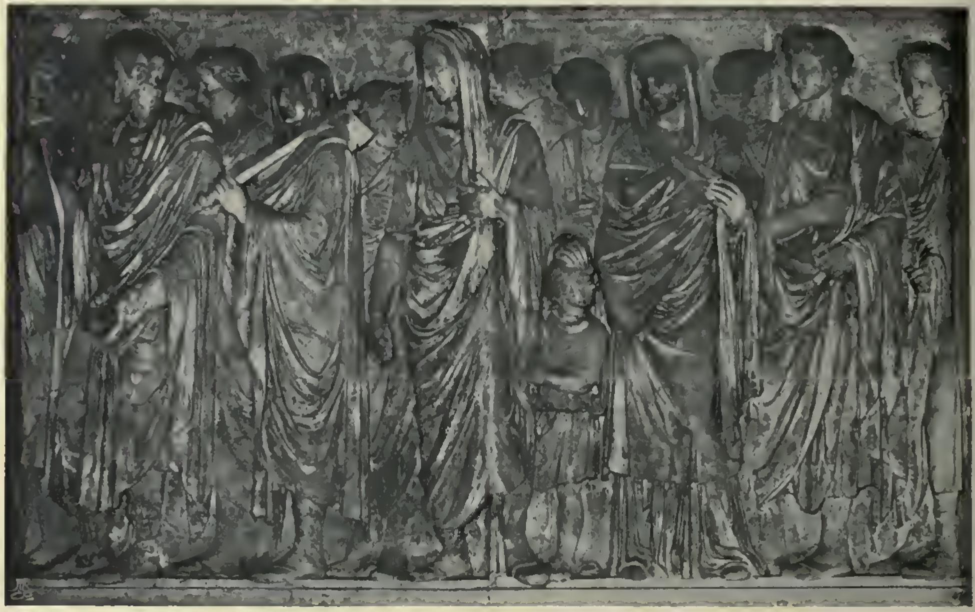

FIG. 10.—Procession from the *Ara Pacis* of Augustus; Florence
(From a photograph by Messrs. Giacomo Brogi)

on Plates II. and III. (II. sacrificial servant with a pig; III. shows the reverse with the garlands of fruit).*

The Augustan style retains the same peculiarities which we already observed in its earliest productions. It is again modelling in clay, to which the manifold materials for which models were made impart something of their technical processes. On the sacrificial procession we also feel the influence of gem engraving, which, under Augustus, had attained in Rome to great consideration. The figures of the background, or rather their heads, which alone are visible, are treated quite in the manner of cameos; in front of these, then, the figures of the foreground, modelled precisely as on the cut stones, show in powerful relief. The small frieze with the animals betrays in its arrangement much that points to the models of the silversmith for beaten plates; above all it shows the figures surrounded by a cavern-

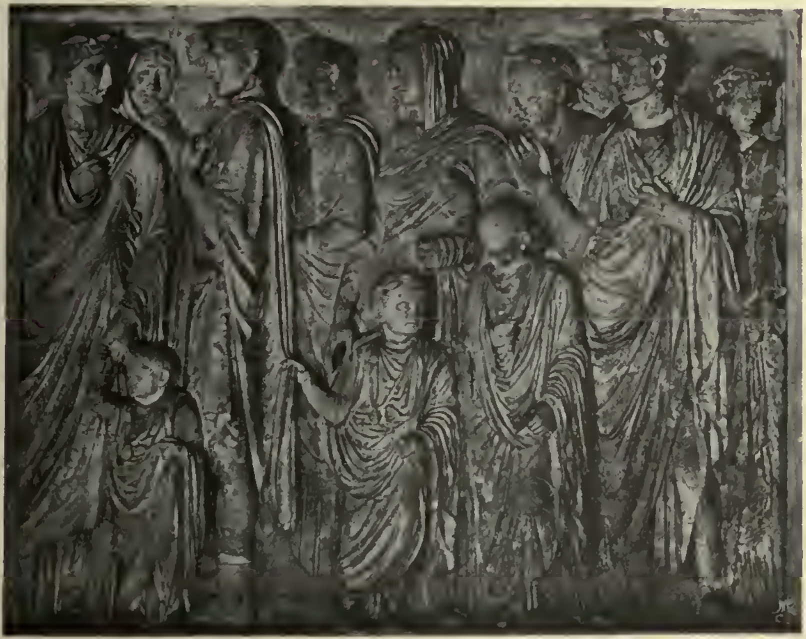

FIG. 11.—Procession from the *Ara Pacis*; Florence (From a photograph by Messrs. Giacomo Brogi)

like arrangement of the landscape background, a peculiarity which is specially clear in our fragment. All this is effected with a fine observation of nature: take for example the rearing bulls in the Villa Medici: how life-like is the treatment of the tufts of hair over the forehead; how skilfully, too, is the hide of this swine treated, with its hard sharp creases and the bristles on the chine! On the wreaths of fruit we may observe still better the naturalistic advance in comparison with the older Hellenistic relief. Each flower, each leaf is so exactly imitated from nature that it can be recognised at once, yet the decorative effect is preserved, indeed everything is calculated to heighten it. How superficially characterised, in comparison, are the flowers on the Tower of the Winds, at Athens, or the wreath of fruit from the theatre of Dionysus, or the garlands on the Stoa in Pergamon; how timid and stiff does even the celebrated oak bough on the small Pergamene frieze appear!

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* Hitherto nothing has been discovered of another work of historical sculpture carried out under Augustus—that series of portraits of celebrated Romans in front of the Temple of Mars Ultor. It began with Aeneas and Romulus, and passed on to the *triumphatores*. Upon the choice of the personages and their *Elogia cf.* the researches of Mommsen in *C. I. L.* i., p. 281 ff.

The imitation of the vegetable world for decorative purposes constitutes one strong side of Augustan art, and the method of its study of nature comes out very clearly in this. We give as a second example an altar with plane foliage in the Museo delle Terme (Pl. IV.)* Branches and leaves are rendered as if they literally lay upon the marble; any alteration in the arrangement of the original being introduced in order to obtain a pleasing and symmetrical distribution of the ornament. Every vein is indicated on the leaves; the methods by which the illusionist style obtains pictorial effects of shadow are not yet employed. It is a dry imitation of nature, and its chief aim is truth to nature. Supposing such objects to have been naturalistically coloured like the marble fruit which is so well imitated in Florence, they must have really looked like the originals. Pliny has preserved for us a noteworthy statement. He relates, after Varro, that actually at that time in Rome this class of imitated fruits in marble, which we now call "Florentine fruit," was made by a certain Possis.† These humble attempts were the starting-point of that luxuriant development of vegetable ornament in later Roman sculpture and indicate a path which even at the outset diverges widely from the old Hellenic stylisation of natural forms.

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* Found on the banks of the Tiber on the former site of the theatre of Apollo. Another fine example is afforded by the sarcophagus which stood in the garden of the Palazzo Caffarelli and is now in Berlin, No. 843*a*; cf. *Beschreibung der Antiken Sculpturen*, No. 2401.

† [Plin. Nat. Hist. xxxv. 155: M. Varro tradit sibi cognitum Romae Possim nomine a quo facta poma et uvas *alitem nescisse* aspectu discernere a veris. For the italicised words, instead

If these wreaths and boughs have taken us far from our point, the fragment of relief with the sacrificial beasts is well calculated to bring us back into the midst of Augustan art. Already in the case of the breastplate of the statue of Augustus, the similarity of the technique to the so-called Hellenistic reliefs has been pointed out. We here reproduce the two most excellent examples of this class, the sheep and the lioness on the well heads from the Palazzo Grimani, which are now in the Imperial Collection at Vienna (Plates V. and VI.). There can no longer be any question here of similarity of technique; no—composition, style, and execution are identical in these well heads, and in the fragments of the *Ara Pacis* from the Palazzo Fiano. Here, as there, we have the cavern-like frame, above which rises a building, and as regards plan, wall, and roof, the temple of the one is constructed similarly to the cottage of the other; there is the same treatment of the animals, the same individual characterisation of their coats—of the skin of the lamb and of the lion, as of the bristly swine; there is the same rendering of bough and of foliage, the same wreaths trailing over rocks; on the *Ara* the little leaves on the garlands of fruits are cut and scratched in, as are those of the poppy in the relief with the sheep. In a word, the analogy is so great that we must ask ourselves whether both works, even if not from the hand of the same master, are not yet connected with one another by an unbroken studio tradition. Even the diversity of purpose and of size effect no difference; the great reliefs for a public monument are as detailed in their execution as the small well heads. They are Hellenistic, but nothing compels us to trace them back to Egypt or some such place, but both, the well heads like the *Ara Pacis*, were executed in Rome by those Greeks who produced the similarly treated busts and portrait statues of the Roman nobility. Further, the fact that the blue-veined marble of the Grimani

cf. I 31

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of the usual *item pisces non possis*, see L. Traube, in the edition of Pliny's Art Books, by E. Sellers and K. Jex-Blake, p. 178.—Ed.]

reliefs comes from Carrara places their Italian origin beyond a doubt.

But with the Vienna reliefs there is connected a whole series of others. I need not develop this any further, since the stylistic interconnection of all these reliefs has been most admirably proved by Schreiber in his work upon the well heads,* and his splendid publication of the Hellenistic reliefs affords the monumental proof of his thesis.† It will be sufficient to test their dates anew, and to bring them into that line of development which unfolds before us in the remaining works of the Augustan period.

The reliefs in the Palazzo Spada must also, in view of their simple daintiness, belong to a period of Hellenistic art in which the exuberance of the baroque, as we see it in the Laocoon and the Farnese Bull, had been followed by exhaustion. Thus must we imagine for ourselves the works with which the Greek artists made their first appearance in the Rome of Pompeius and of Cæsar. They may have found their models in Egypt. We have already referred to the Portland Vase for similar types. A style of relief which seems to belong to Campania may be somewhat older.‡ These mythological reliefs, however, of which several series, even though only in fragments,§ have been preserved to us, are of Roman origin: the oldest belong to the period before Augustus, and others are contemporary with the Augustan portraits

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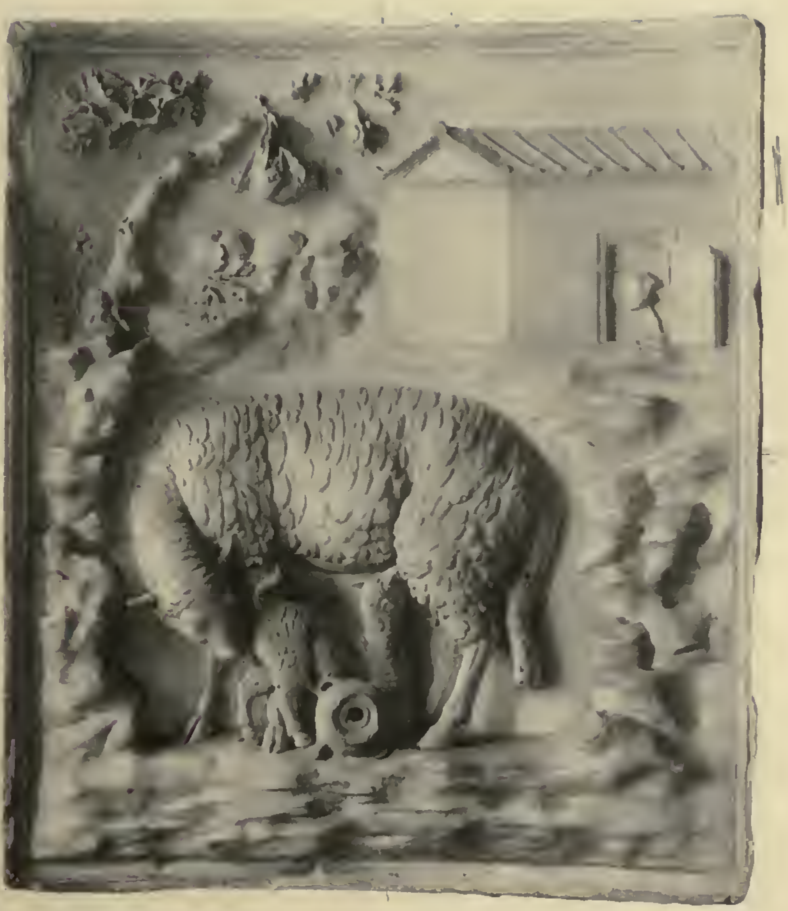
* *Die Brunnenreliefs aus Palazzo Grimani*, Vienna.

† *Die hellenistischen Reliefbilder*, Leipzig, 1889-93.

‡ To this class belong the Bacchic scene preserved in three replicas, one in Naples (Schreiber, pl. 47), and two in the Capitol (*ib.*, plates 46 and 48), the relief with the story of Dolon (Rome, Via Margana, Schreiber, pl. 45), the naked boy riding through a grove behind a maiden holding a burning torch in front of her (Inv. No. 6691, missing in Schreiber's book). In all these reliefs, the treatment of the foliage is identical: a solid mass upon which the leaves are then indicated in delicate relief. This connects them with other works, such as the relief with maidens sacrificing in Munich (Glyptothek, No. 136), and separates them clearly from that Roman group with the gnarled, knotted trees.

§ The following belong to different series: I. The ten reliefs in the Palazzo Spada (Helbig, 945-52), from S. Agnese fuori le mura, of which, however, only six belong to the original set, while the two reliefs with Paris and Eros and Paris and Oenone were added as late as the age of the Antonines. This is proved by the sprawling recumbent figure of the river god, which has been awkwardly adjusted to a composition imitated in stone from a Hellenistic picture of different size. The shape of the ship in this relief is, on this account, entirely useless for determining the date (*cf.* Robert in *Arch. Anzeiger*, 1889, p. 414). II. The Deliverance of Andromeda in the Capitol (Helbig, 461). III. Daedalus and Icarus in the Villa



RELIEF FROM A WELL-HEAD.
(Vienna.)

Plate V.

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and other official reliefs. The schematic forms of the fluttering draperies occur still, it is true, in the figures on the breastplate of Augustus; but a number of these mythological reliefs display it also in an older form. Side by side with still severer compositions, such as the "Wounded Adonis," the "Bellerophon with Pegasus," the "Odysseus and Diomedes," the "Amphion and Zethus," "Daedalus and Pasiphae" (below, Fig. 26). and the "Death of Opheltes" in the Palazzo Spada, or the "Daedalus and Icarus" of the Villa Albani (below, Fig. 27), and the "Perseus and Andromeda" of the Capitol (Fig. 12)—in all of which motives borrowed from older Greek art are interspersed in a manner resembling the translations of Greek strophae in the Odes of Horace—we find compositions in which the style has maintained

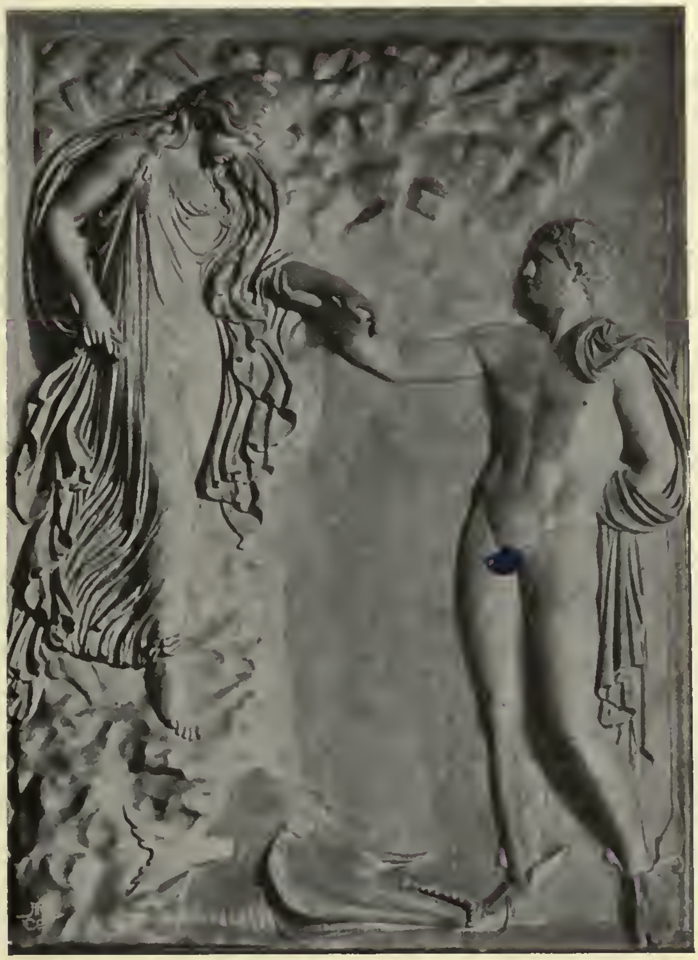

FIG. 12.—Perseus and Andromeda. Relief in the Capitol (Photograph Alinari)

Albani (Schreiber, pl. 2; Helbig, 783), and the boy Satyr drinking, in the Vatican (Schreiber, pl. 28; Helbig, 388), from the Palatine. IV. The replica (in rosso antico) of the Daedalus and Icarus, from another series found near Naples, in the Villa Albani (Helbig, 807). V. The boy Satyr—the complete composition with the nymph who is giving him to drink—in the Lateran (Schreiber, pl. 21). VI. The Sleeping Endymion in the Capitol (Schreiber, pl. 13=our Fig. 13, after a photograph by Alinari). VII. The three reliefs in Palazzo Colonna with the Hermaphrodite, Narcissus and the Satyr (Schreiber, plates 15, 16, 17).

its full maturity, and where the mythological relief stands upon the same artistic height as the Augustan portrait. I mean, above all, the Sleeping Endymion of the Capitol (Fig. 13), whose pendant, from the hand, apparently, of the same master, I would fain take to be the head which has become famous under the name of the Medusa Ludovisi (Fig. 14).* Expression, facial forms, and treatment of the hair accord in every detail. The arrangement of the loose locks occurs again in the Andromeda of the Capitol and the Hypsipile of the Palazzo Spada. It is, therefore, unnecessary to suggest a Medusa, or, as has lately been done, an Erinnys. Any sorrowing woman in her sleep could have been depicted in this wise. Ariadne, forsaken by Theseus, sleeping amid tormenting dreams, till she be awakened by Dionysus, would be a suitable counterpart to the sleeping Endymion awaiting the visit of Selene. Ariadne in this

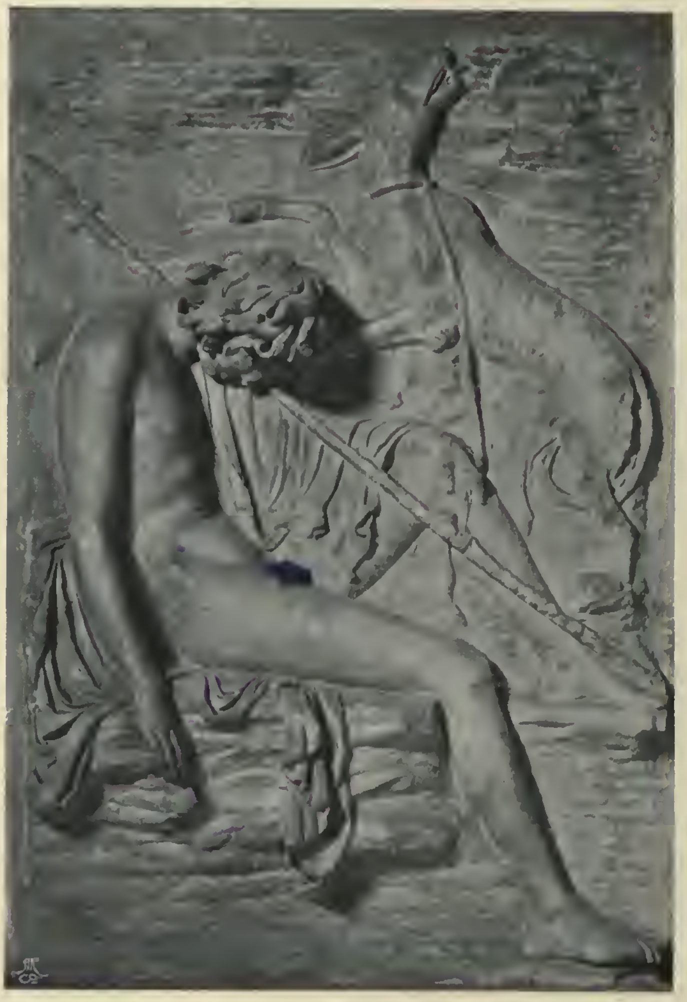

FIG. 13.—Endymion. Relief in the Capitol
(Photograph Alinari)

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* Helbig, 866; Petersen, *Römische Miltheilungen* vii. p. 106 f., where the modern undercutting on the relief, as we now have it, is clearly shown; for all that we are not forced to attribute the head to a statue in the round; the head of the Endymion also stands out almost free.

situation was a favourite subject of contemporary painting. But if any one should decline to admit this marvellous head within this group, then the Endymion alone would suffice to prove not only the anatomical capabilities of these artists, but also their power of physiognomical expression, as, for instance, in the delicate touch of reluctance upon the face of the boy.

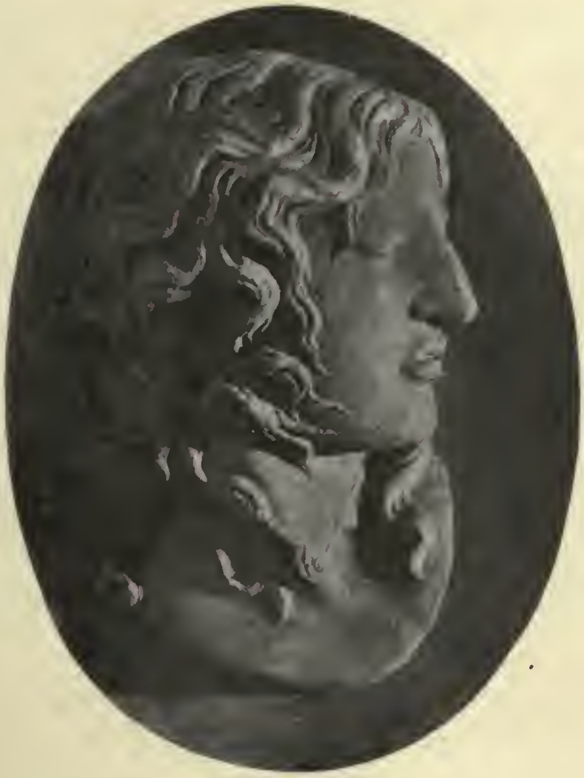

FIG. 14.—Head of Woman Asleep. Relief in the Museo Boncompagni-Ludovisi (Photograph Alinari)

We next see a further development of the style in the subtly treated, delicate, boyish figures in the Palazzo Colonna, where the accessories of landscape go together with the *Ara Pacis* and the well heads in Vienna. Its later manifestations are those crowded landscapes such, for example, as the relief with the peasant driving the cow to market (Fig. 15, Schreiber, plate 80), in the Glyptothek at Munich (No. 301), to which the relief with the Poet and the Muse in the Lateran* (Shreiber, pl. 34) is the pendant borrowed from town life (Fig. 16). Clearly marked out are those more freely rendered landscapes, which may already belong to the second century B.C., such as the "Boat entering a Harbour," in the Capitol (Schreiber, pl. 79), or "The Lion Tearing a Bull to Pieces" (Schreiber, pl. 78), and even in the decadent technique of the end of the third century we come upon after echoes of this style of landscape in relief. At any rate, it does not seem wise to assign an earlier date to the relief of the "Hind" in the collection at Vienna (Schreiber, pl. 67), with its countless drill holes; the relief comes from Megara, and bears witness to the later retrograde movement of Roman art towards the East, a movement which I intend to discuss later.

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* I do not know on what ground Schreiber calls the poet Philiscus, *cf.* Helbig, 663.

I will not attempt to arrange, even in a chronological series, the landscape and genre pictures of the Augustan style. It is easy to ascertain where the series begins and ends, otherwise the tenour of this art is too even to afford characteristic landmarks of development. Except where, as in the case of statues and busts, the lifetime of the person pourtrayed is decisive, or where there are external criteria to confirm the chronology, it would be rash to try to establish dates within its limits. It may be that the Vienna well-heads and the *Ara Pacis* are the work of the same artist, but it is just as likely that studio tradition is the influence here, and the dainty reliefs may be a whole generation earlier than the large monument.

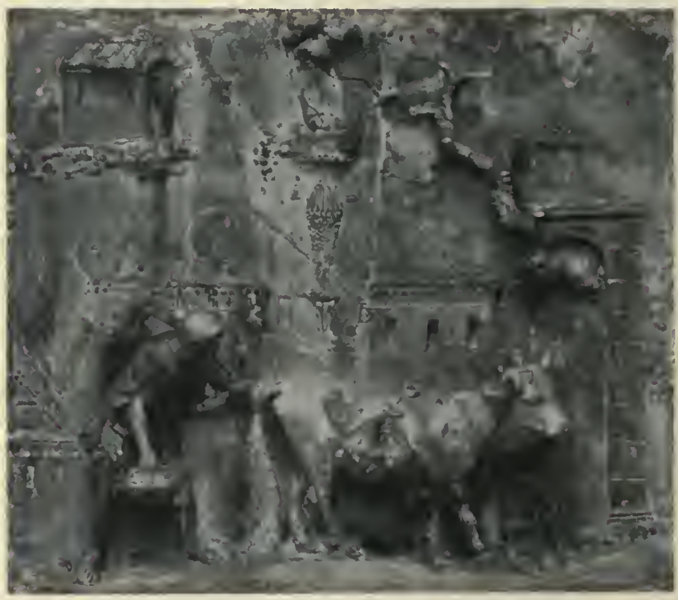

FIG. 15.—Relief in the Glyptothek (From a photograph by Messrs. Bruckmann of Munich)

All these marble products of Augustan art—mythological or historical reliefs, landscapes, scenes from animal life, garlands of fruit or foliage, imitations of ancient hammered images of the gods or of statues cast in bronze—have this one peculiarity in common, that their detailed execution can only be explained by the existence of a clay model based upon careful studies of nature. Schreiber has well shown that the marble reliefs exhibit a series of technical peculiarities in common with chased silversmith's work;[*] we must, however, limit his judgment in so far as to assert that the imitation of metal technique was unintentional, but that artists who were schooled in every technique had lost the finer feeling for the stylistic requirements of material, and that they accordingly betrayed in their clay models their experience of other kinds of technique.[†]

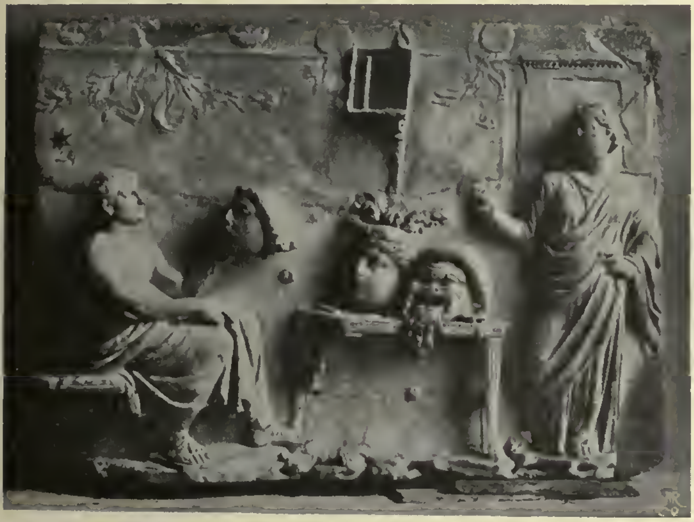

FIG. 16.—Relief in the Lateran
(Photograph Alinari)

This is still all Hellenistic art, but Hellenistic art in Rome, fashioned by Greek artists, but already influenced by Roman patronage. It is the last phase of Hellenistic art, the basis from which Roman art is afterwards to develop. What the most circumspect historian of architecture says of Roman architecture is true in equal measure of their sculpture: "Le Romain trouve chez les peuplades grecques des exécutants supérieurs; il s'en empare, il les paye, il leur permet de décorer ses monuments suivant leur goût; mais il entend que l'artiste grec ne sera qu'un ouvrier. Quant aux dispositions générales de ses monuments, au système de construction, au mode, il prétend, lui, Romain, les imposer seul, depuis le Pont-Euxin jusqu'en Bretagne."[‡]

An attempt to apportion the most remarkable single monuments of this style among the various artists handed down to us by tradition would be purely childish. But it is important to note that what we know of the manner in which the most celebrated artist of the first century prepared his works tallies exactly with what we learn from the monuments. We arrived at the general result that in the case of all, or, at any rate, of all carefully executed works of this kind, be it for copies of famous statues, for portraits or for reliefs, carefully executed clay models were set up, which, through being slavishly copied, obscured the intrinsic peculiarities of sculpture in stone. While models carried out in such detail surprise us in the case of sculpture in marble, they are perfectly comprehensible in the case of bronze and of chiselled silver. Now Pliny tells us, quoting from Varro, that Pasiteles—an artist who was probably still alive in 33 B.C.*—" said that modelling was the mother of chasing, statuary, and sculpture, and, though he excelled in all these arts, he never executed any work without first making a clay model."† And this practice in all branches of formative art—he was also a worker in ivory (*Nat. Hist.* xxxvi. 39)—he seems to have acquired through being a silversmith, for he is mentioned by Pliny among the chasers in metal (*Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 156); therefore that branch of art which necessitates the most exact clay models was his foster-mother. He modelled a lion from nature, and was nearly torn to pieces in the process by a panther which burst from another cage (*Nat. Hist.* xxxvi. 40). He shared the fondness of the Roman amateurs for older Greek art; indeed, the five books which he wrote upon famous works of art exhibit him as the guide of these connoisseurs. Engaged as he was in his studies from nature and the best employ to which he could put them, he apparently entrusted to his pupils the copying of the famous statues which he picked out to describe; at any rate, a certain Stephanus, who signs a copy of an archaic statue of a youth, calls himself a pupil of Pasiteles (Villa Albani, 906; Helbig, 744). No one would blame us if we attributed our lioness in Vienna and its pendant to Pasiteles. But since we must assume that the best of his colleagues in Rome worked on the same principles it is sufficient to point to these reliefs as the most adapted among extant works to bring his manner clearly before our eyes.

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[*] Schreiber, *Brunnenreliefs*, p. 24.

[†] *Ib.* p. 30.

[‡] Viollet le Duc, *Entretiens sur l'Architecture*, Paris, 1863, p. 73.

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* H. Brunn, *Geschichte der Griechischen Künstler*, i. p. 596. [What is known about this curious artist is put together by E. Sellers on p. lxxii. f. of the Introduction to the *Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Ancient Artists*.—ED.]

† Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxv. 156. Translation Sellers and Jex-Blake, p. 181.

Their contemporaries had already drawn the obvious conclusion that the clay models made by these artists were equal in value or even superior to their finished work. At the same time as Pasiteles, lived Arcesilaus, who shared with him the reputation for the most careful preparation of the work of art. Artists bought his models in clay for a higher price than the finished works of others; he even sold the plaster cast of his model of a crater for a talent (*Nat. Hist.* xxxv. 155). He made statues in marble such as the *Venus Genetrix*, and he also made a lioness "with winged Loves sporting about her; some are holding her by a cord, others forcing her to drink out of a horn, and others are putting shoes upon her."* This Arcesilaus also seems to have been related to the master of the Vienna reliefs.

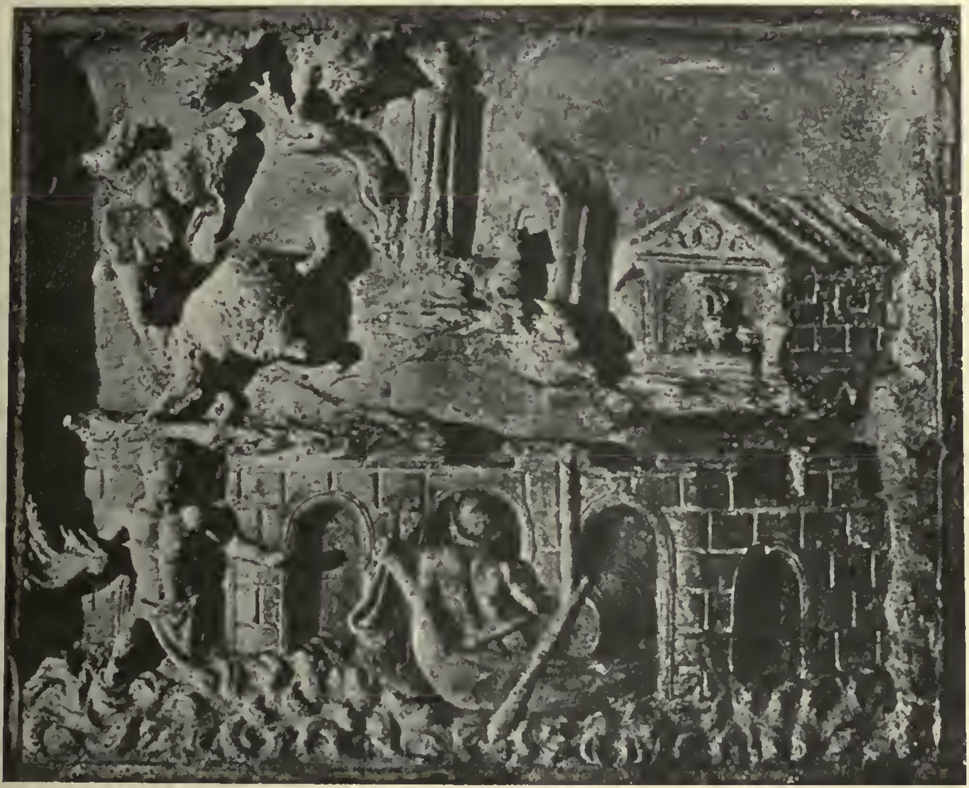

FIG. 17.—Augustan Relief in the Capitol (After Schreiber, *Hellensitische Reliefbilder*)

The rougher decorative works of this time, marble vases and the like, which were destined for the adornment of gardens or for similar purposes, have been most carefully collected and studied. Here are found together in a chaotic condition all the elements which refined artists like those just named welded into a new style. It is significant that the men who at that time found themselves together in Rome in the same workshop or as members of the same art guild were all from Athens It shows that in other places also, besides Alexandria and Rome, art had decayed in the first century B.C., and that even Athenian artists were found to imitate and to combine older motives. In Rome these Athenians found themselves in their right place with a public whose average requirements did not always encourage the rise of a very subtle style. There were many people who wanted something similar to what refined amateurs possessed, something that should appear ancient and out of the common, but without costing too much time or money. A Salpion or a Sosibios cannot be named in the same breath with a Pasiteles. They were capable of nothing beyond a slavish parody of his intentions and his achievements.

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* Pliny, translation Sellers and Jex-Blake.

A yawning lacuna has thus been filled up. We see a retrogressive Philistinism follow upon Pergamene extravagance, and can observe how by degrees it turned to a somewhat dry naturalism which partly fits in with new circumstances or at any rate favours to the highest degree everything that was in conformity with it. If the Augustan style was an Hellenistic attempt to create an art for the Romans, the duration of its pre-eminence yet shows that the attempt succeeded. The public accepted it quietly for seventy years. But as it excluded, or at any rate discouraged, the heroic, it seemed to many to need supplementing. Copyists effected this easily: they took the archaic figure of an ephebe, the one, for example, which Stephanus the pupil of Pasiteles had copied, and grouped it now with the one, now with the other archaic figure,* thinking to have thus created a new ideal work of art. It is, however, unfair to the school of Pasiteles to attribute to it these childish combinations. This school attempted a totally different organic development. Menelaus, a pupil of Stephanus, tried to push back into a semi-mythical setting the distinguished personages

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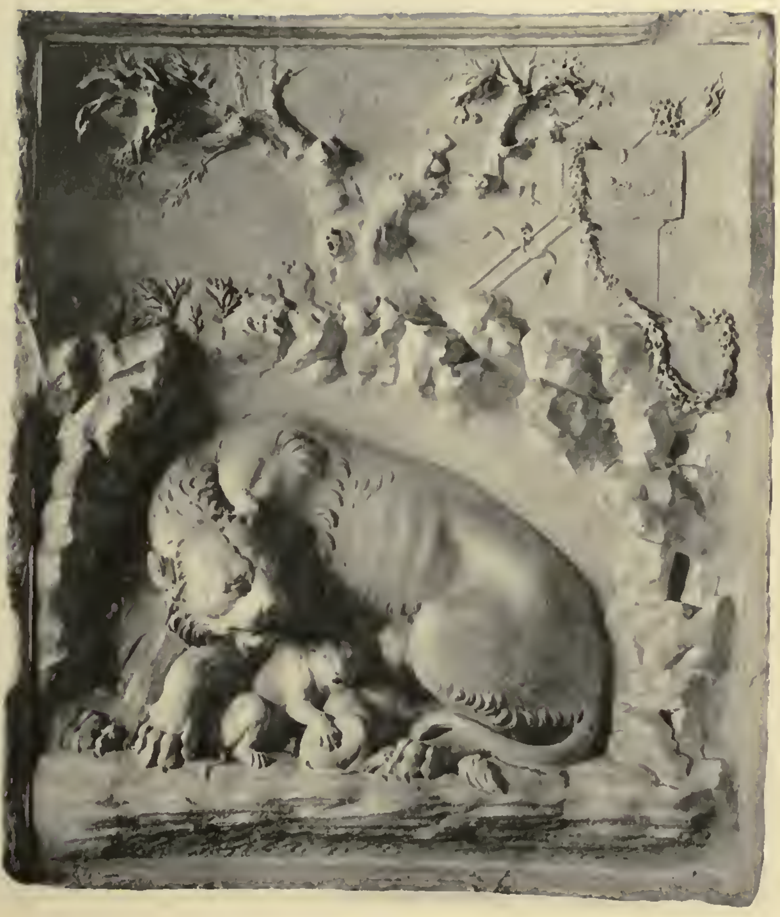
* [The best known instances are the "Orestes and Electra" at Naples, and the "Orestes and Pylades" in the Louvre.—Ed.]



RELIEF FROM A WELL-HEAD.
(Vienna.)

Plate VI.

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of the entourage of Augustus, and to create a new ideal style with the refined artistic means of the *Ara Pacis.* His well-known group* is a genial, yet, owing to the lack of expression in the figures, a mistaken experiment. The world-propelling genius of Augustan art was not a sculptor but a poet. The verses of Virgil are the unsurpassed example of a style, which attempted to accommodate Greek tradition to the taste of the Latin peoples. He succeeded in getting the ancient myths acted by well-bred personages, whom he places in gay landscapes and surrounds with all kinds of animals, which he had studied, as carefully as ever Pasiteles had done, in the nature all around. There is not one among those reliefs which cannot be best elucidated by the help of the verses of Virgil, though this would above all bring out clearly the victorious superiority of the poet, whose native joy in nature and in country life and whose innate lofty intelligence raised him high above the sphere of these Graeculi. Though the Augustan style was soon surpassed as regards the formative arts, yet the poetry of that time remains a wonder and a model to the eighteen centuries that look back upon it.

* [In the Museo Boncompagni-Ludovisi; Helbig, 887. The group is signed.—Ed.]

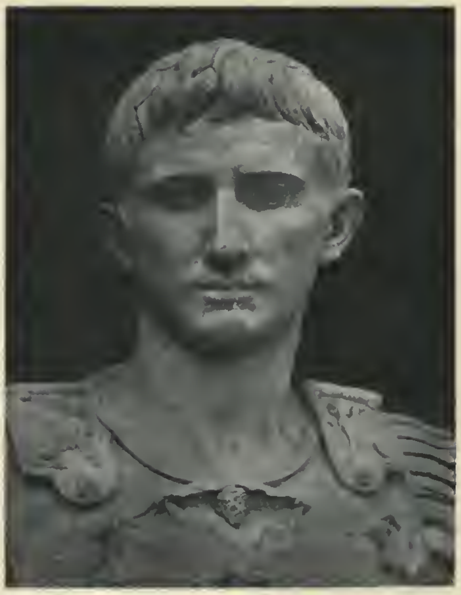

FIG. 17A.—Head of the Augustus from Prima Porta

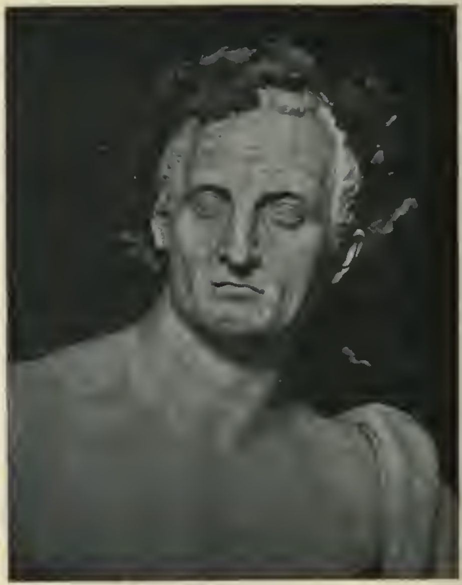

FIG. 18.—Head of Nerva

(Photographs by D. Anderson)

III

THE Greeks in Rome would never have shaken off this imitative naturalism. It was only when Roman amateurs gave up the exclusive patronage of Greek artists and began to give their commissions to people of their own race that a change of style could take place. For the post-Augustan age, the opposition of Hellenic and Etruscan art, so characteristic of earlier periods, had long ceased to have a definite meaning. Instead, a contrast makes itself felt between a Græcising art in Rome, and a common Latin art on an Etruscan basis in all the rest of Italy except the purely Greek districts of the South. However old-fashioned and provincial this art may have seemed to the Græcism then affected in Rome, it had a dignity and stability of its own which remained unshaken for centuries, in spite of repeated inroads of Hellenic and Hellenistic prototypes. It aimed at such a reproduction of phenomena as should give the effect of truth, and the result was an art of illusionist portraiture. These portrait heads—home-made enough, many of them—express clearly the Western spirit, and point the way to a new departure in Roman art destined to differ noticeably from Hellenistic work.

Even in cases where it is quite plain that the intention was to provide an Italian city with an ambitious work of sculpture conceived in the manner of Hellenistic art, the local craftsman betrays his presence by peculiarities of execution. The best instance of this is the pediment decoration of a temple found near Luni, representing the destruction of the Niobids. It is, besides, the most complete existing example of that kind of Italian terra-cotta work.* The intention was to produce something in that finished Hellenistic Baroque, of which the Pergamene altar is the most instructive instance; indeed, an Hellenistic composition may have served as a direct prototype. In large towns, we know, prototypes of Hellenistic origin began to give way to a feeble kind of "Empire" style about the beginning of the first century, but it is uncertain how long they may have held their own in the country districts. It is, therefore, difficult to date our Luni sculpture accurately, though there are some indications that we should bring it as low as the end of the Republican period. The only extant head of the group, the Apollo,† if it were placed before any experienced amateur, not necessarily skilled in research, but fairly familiar with the museums, and having an intelligent idea of the classifications of ancient and modern art, would most likely at first sight not remind him of the antique at all. The prominent eyes, fleshy nostrils, sensuous open mouth, undulating contour of the cheek, and thick, wrinkled neck—all these details, and the life-like portrait effect resulting from a combination of all of them, would inevitably recall to an amateur a multitude of similar heads referable to Tuscan origin, but more likely to confuse than to instruct him in a question of date. For this Apollo bears a very close

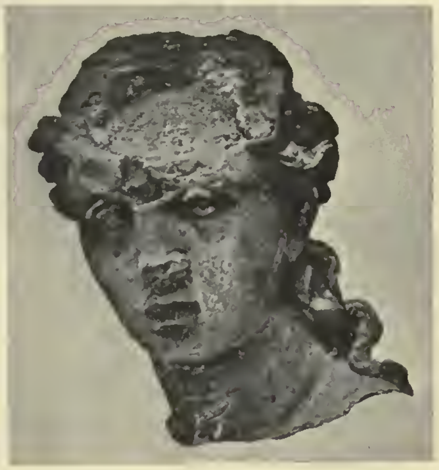

FIG. 19.—Head of Apollo in terra-cotta from Luni (Florence)

and perplexing family resemblance to the heads on the drawings, cartoons, and frescoes of Sandro Botticelli, Verrocchio, and Filippino Lippi. And the Luni horses bear a greater resemblance to those in the Triumph of Death at Pisa than to any horses in Greek art. The composition may be borrowed, but the modeller, brought up on Etruscan portrait sculpture, has metamorphosed the separate figures according to his native ideals. These figures are instructive, as showing what measure of talent and skill was possessed by those craftsmen from small Italian towns, who had been attracted to the Metropolis with its increasing area and growing luxury, in the post-Augustan period, in order to supplement the Greek artists who no longer sufficed for the execution of the numerous commissions. When once these Italian sculptors had become numerous in the city, their traditional methods, harmonising as they did with the Roman character, could not fail to crowd out the Hellenistic style, which had been imposed from without during the Augustan age.

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* L. A. Milani, *I frontoni di un tempio tuscanico scoperto in Luni*, Museo Italiano di antichità classica, vol. i., Florence, 1885, pp. 89–112 e, plates, 3–7.

† *Loc. cit.* Plate 4, from which our Fig. 19 is (by permission) reproduced.

And yet the rapid growth of the illusionist style was really the result of preparatory work done by the imitative-naturalistic school. Without that intermediate Augustan style, art could never have made the step from Greek to Latin. The imitative-naturalistic style was the bridge over which the heavy load of artistic experience amassed by Hellenism was carried to the West, there to be dealt with at the will and pleasure of Western taste. Out of its own resources alone this Latin art would probably never have attained mastery of those multitudinous natural forms, the diligent study of which first gave actuality to the historic relief, the portrait-statue in all its varieties, and the revolution in decorative design. But when bare naturalism, combined with elaborated technique, was there to form a starting-point, it was possible to take the natural forms thus accurately observed and to metamorphose them gradually in harmony with the demands of the illusionist impression. Extant works show that the metamorphosis was complete by the time of the Flavii.

We must not look for the first manifestations of this style in aristocratic circles. Its translation from clay to marble is first found not in the busts of Emperors and Princesses, but in those simple memorial slabs on which husband, wife, children, or fellow workmen are cut in high relief. As most of these monuments are inscribed, they could easily be arranged in order of date, and a collection of them would enable the student to follow accurately the growth and diffusion of the illusionist style. Similarly the metamorphosis of ornament which makes this period of Roman art so important for all succeeding centuries must have begun not on public buildings, nor even in the palaces and villas of fashionable cavaliers and ladies, but on structures erected for people of simple habits who had acquired wealth. The imperative demands of their new social position induced them to give up the familiar clay and wax images, and to adorn their family memorial chapels with works in marble. It is true that the most important sculpture of this kind that we possess—a work in all respects Roman and bearing no mark of Hellenistic art-tradition—dates no further back than the very end of the first century; it cannot be older, because the Coliseum and the Arch of Titus are both represented on it, but it is assuredly not the first of its class. I refer to the monument of the Haterii, the remains of which were found in 1848 on the Via Labicana near Centocelle. Unfortunately only separate fragments came to the Lateran Museum, so that a reconstruction of the whole is impossible, but enough is left to show the national character of the monument (Fig. 20).* There are three slabs, and on them are represented a street, the exposition of a corpse, a crane for lifting loads, and a tomb so richly ornamented on all sides as to be quite incompatible with the severe rules of Greek architecture. In addition to this, the contents of the cella of the monument are made visible by being placed some in front of the façade and some above the roof. This mass of detail does not produce the effect of either Greek or Roman relief, but rather recalls the painted slabs stuck up on booths at a fair to entice the curious customer by showing what a variety of wares is kept inside. It is only to insure durability that these things are represented here in low relief. Definite requirements ever create of themselves definite means for their own satisfaction. When childish curiosity desires to find in a picture as full and as precise information as can be given, there will always arise an art of representation which seeks to pile up objects as long as there is room for them, without troubling itself about arrangement, symmetrical, natural, or conventional. Just as these slabs exhibit the lying-in-state of the corpse, the mourning women, the flute-players, the weeping relatives, the lamps and candelabra, the street through which the funeral procession went, the gods whose temples lay on the route, the tomb where the procession stopped, the dead buried before in the same place, the altar where the sacrifices were offered, and the machine with the workmen (the machine perhaps intended to commemorate how some member of the family had distinguished himself in its construction), so no doubt in the same simple and emphatic language the pictures displayed at triumphs would tell their story of conquered towns with their principal buildings and all the remarkable things contained in them and of the special events which had happened in the war. Indeed, I feel convinced that the reliefs from the tomb of the Haterii form the nearest monumental evidence for the perishable class of triumph pictures, and have taken over from them these subjects of everyday life. In any case, they are far removed from every variety of stylistic, Hellenised art and have grown straight out of the spirit and the needs of the Roman people. A real Roman feature is seen in the busts of husband and wife placed in frames designed in imitation of those wooden shrines in which Roman households kept the waxen busts of their ancestors.

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* Helbig, 672; photograph Alinari, 6385–6387; also *Monumenti*, v., plates 6–8; *cf.* H. Brunn, *I Monumenti degli Aterii*, Annali, 1849, p. 363 ff. who is wrong in assigning the monument to the third century; the treatment of the busts and the plant-forms points to the first century. Dr. C. Hülsen, in answer to my request that he should examine the monument again, writes: "I think there can be no doubt that the reliefs belong to the end of the first century, for the characters of the inscription do not admit the possibility of a lower date."

Under such circumstances we may expect to find national art also on those parts of the monument that are purely decorative. It is impossible to describe them all separately; we must confine ourselves to the investigation of a three-sided pillar decorated in relief on two sides,* which we select because it may stand for a typical example of

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* Benndorf and Schöne in their catalogue of the Lateran (p. 220, No. 346), doubt whether this pillar belongs to the grave of the Haterii, and refer to Brunn (p. 409) in

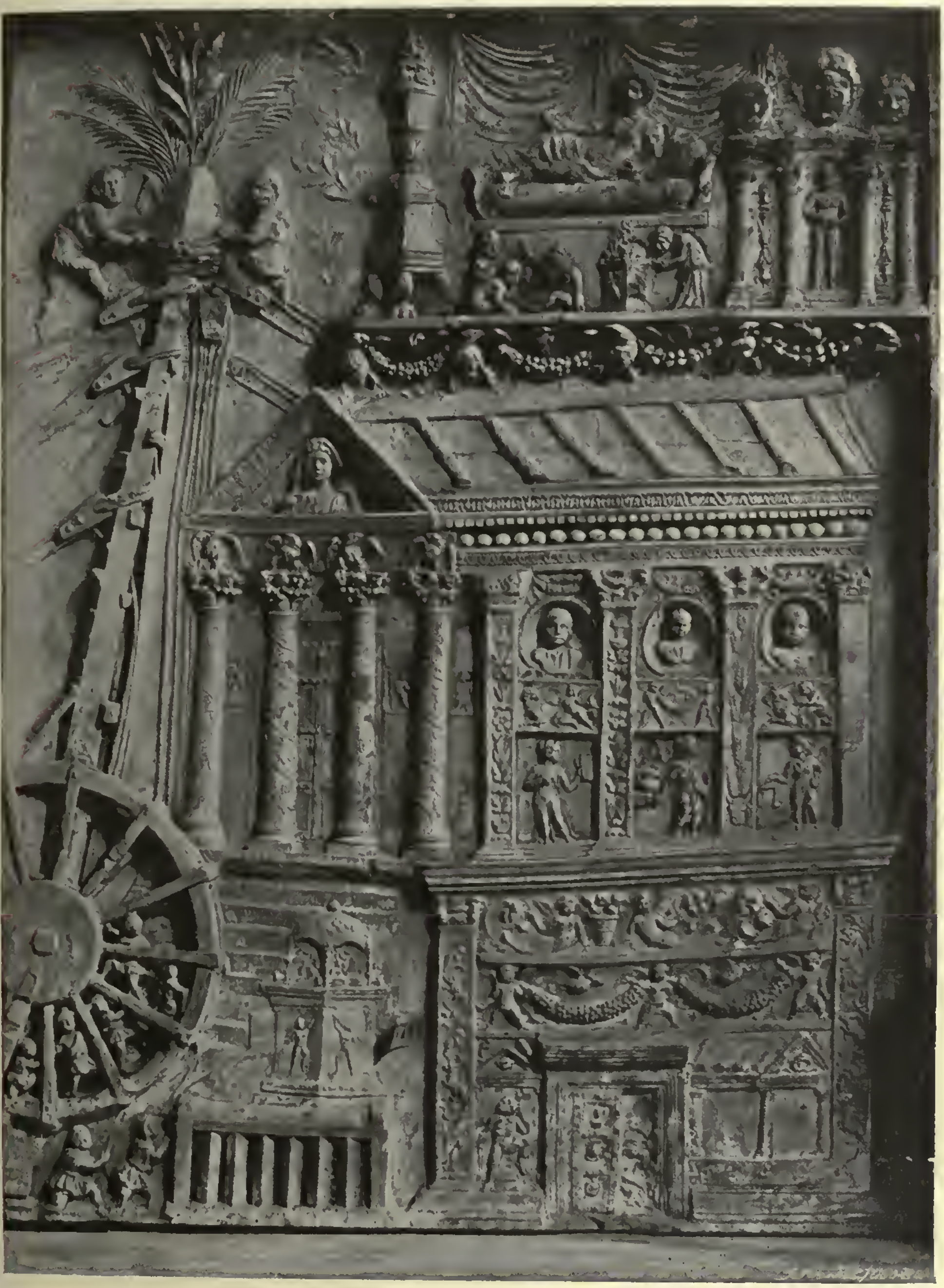
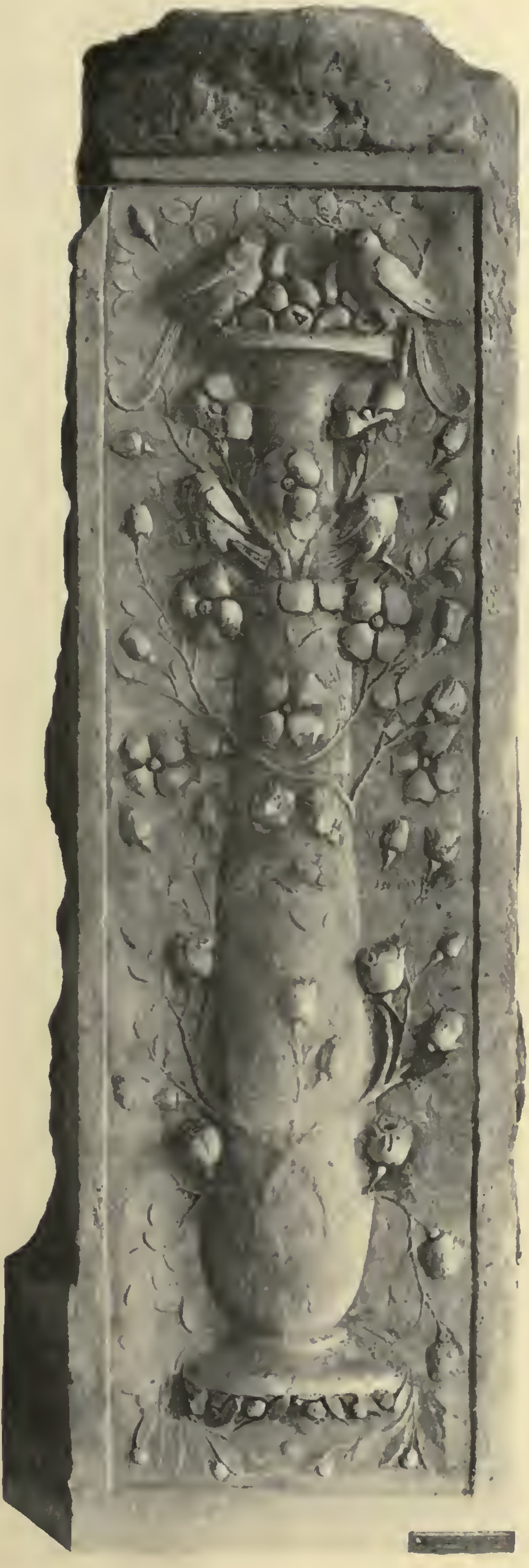


FIG. 20.—Sepulchral Relief of the Haterii in the Lateran (Photograph Alinari)

the illusionist style. (Plates VII. and VIII.) The *impression* intended was that conveyed by a rose-bush growing round a vase and covered with buds, blossoms, and leaves quivering in the air. The whole success of the design depends on the *impression* of a graceful twining plant, stirred by the wind and alive with opening buds and fragrant blossoms. Therefore, the individual twigs and leaves do not closely follow the natural model as they do in the altar decorated with plane-tree foliage in the Museo delle Terme (Plate IV.), but emphasis is laid on whatever would heighten the desired effect of movement and bloom, while any detail likely to disturb it is suppressed. The sculptor who carried out the design had not even full-blown roses before him to look at, else he surely would have given them five petals. He was merely making a memory picture* of a full-blown flower, and from the force of old habit he gave it the architectonic form of a quatrefoil rosette. But although for the full-blown rose he used a stock convention—and an incorrect one too—he had carefully studied the buds on a rose-tree in bloom and had noticed how they looked at different stages of growth before they opened out. He could even apply his new knowledge to the full-blown rose, when it was seen in profile. It did not occur to him to copy bit by bit all the details of a rose-bush before his eyes. In his *naïveté*, wherever he thought he possessed a complete artistic idea, as in the case of the full-blown rose, he left it unaltered, but where there was no accepted memory image to refer to, he created a new one by accurate observation of natural forms. Having provided himself thus with all the forms he needed, he knew how to arrange the twigs in a free design round the slender vase, and by the subtlest artistic means to conjure up the illusion of a rose-bush in bloom. By varying the height of the relief in which flowers, buds, and leaves are cut, and their relation to the background, he

support of their suggestion, but they overlook the circumstance that on p. 408 Brunn expressly states that it does belong: *poi un altro pezzo triangolare con ornamento di fiori e fusti di Candelabro.*

* [*I.e.*, *Erinnerungsbild;* I have preferred to translate the expression literally as "memory picture" or "memory image," though the current English scientific term is *visual image;* I need only refer to Professor W. James' lucid pages on this subject, *Text-book of Psychology*, popular ed., p. 302 ff.—Ed.]



PILASTER FROM TOMB OF THE HATERII

(Lateran.)

Plate VII

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produces an impression of pulsating life which a mere facsimile cannot completely give, because the impression depends partly on undercutting and the consequent successive variation in light and shade presented to the eye of a moving spectator. The illusion, however, does not degenerate into a clumsy deception. The vases do not stand on the ground; they are suspended free, and under their bases are laid cherry twigs with ripe fruit. On the neck of each vase two birds, placed symmetrically, peck the leaves of the rose-bush, and on the mouth of each two parrots are sitting talking to each other. One vase is filled with fruit heaped up over the edge, and the other with some liquid substance; large humble-bees have come and settled on the rim, to suck the sweet juice. One of the parrots in the heat of discussion has seized a humble-bee and is vigorously twisting it round, thus adding a slight touch of humour. Nowhere do we find any dull imitation of actuality, but everywhere a free play of symmetry and pleasing design, composed of motives not conventional but illusionist in effect, selected and arranged with artistic intention.

It has lately been shown* how from ancient Egypt to the Hellenistic period vegetable ornament was evolved from a groundwork of a few very simple plant forms, taken from nature at the beginning of the development and retained to the end, and how the history of this kind of ornament has nothing to tell, except about the stylistic transformation and elaboration of these simple primitive forms. We saw how the Augustan age, relying on detached Hellenistic experiments, tried by toilsome imitation of fruits and leaves to break through the hitherto narrowly confined limits of a system of vegetable ornament.† On the tomb of the Haterii the problem how to win over to the domain of art the manifold variety of nature which had been concealed from the artists' eyes for so many thousand years was at last solved, and by the Romans—not the least of their triumphs. This means as great an advance on the old Oriental-Greek ornament as the Roman vault is on the beam-roof.

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* Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen, Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*, Berlin, 1890, *passim*. Nowhere is the typical in the productions of Greek art so clearly presented as in these essays on the rise and development of the Greek branches and palmettes.

† Alois Riegl, *loc. cit.* who, as p. 322, note 72 shows, had rightly grasped the essence of Augustan art, was deceived by an incorrect illustration in Niccolini, which he reproduces in his Fig. 177, and mistook for purely ornamental foliage a surprisingly naturalistic plane branch in its first fresh leaf. The vine-branches (Fig. 178) are more nearly related to our rose-pillar, but they are a poor, imperfect example of the illusionist style.

It is unfair to reproach the generations preceding our own for passing carelessly by works of this kind under the prevailing impression that art had declined in the Roman period. We should rather be grateful to the few who had insight keen enough to appreciate the beauty of these designs, in spite of the weight of prejudice against them.* During the half-century which has passed since they were discovered, art and art criticism have struck out new paths—we can look at them free from traditional bias. In the first half of our century there was a reaction against the dainty fastidious frugality of the "Empire" style, and a flood of flowers and leaves treated with downright realism, as a rule brightly coloured and tastelessly arranged, began to cover the ornamental parts of buildings and furniture. In the second half of the century another revulsion of taste was experienced. Cultured critics now maintained that the plant as it is in nature must never be represented in decorative art at all. Even the illusionist imitation of a plant for purposes of art was regarded with horror. All plant life must be prettily conventionalised, so as to appear as a flat decoration without plastic effect. Examples were sought for in all the periods, when art either had not learnt or had forgotten how to represent a plant with truth to nature. Schools of art were set up to inculcate the doctrine, and while painters were taught in their academies to obtain the effects of deceptive reality, craftsmen on the contrary were being encouraged to renounce or to forget those means of representation, the attainment of which had always been the aim and end of art. They were told to avoid the periods of European art in which illusionist treatment had flourished, and to study those periods when art had not yet outgrown the fascinating childish stammer of convention. An artificial barrier was raised between modern painting and its application to handicraft. As might have been foreseen, the attempt to make an unnatural chasm in the art development of the nineteenth century was defeated by the growth of modern painting itself. Yet the passion for archaism had its uses, and still does service by directing attention to the productions of the handicraft of earlier periods.

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* Brunn, *Annali*, 1849, p. 409: *Ommetto qui la particolare menzione di molti pezzi architettonici, cornicioni, lastre con folgiami et fiori in parte esequiti con una diligenza ed uno studio di natura che, monostante la decadenza dell' arte, quando furono fatti, meritano di esser studiati anch' oggi dagli artisti.*

In the last decades of this century an event took place which is without parallel in the history of art. To the best of our knowledge art had hitherto developed regularly. Beginning in Egypt, passing over to Asia, adopted by the Greeks, transferred to the West and thence to the North, it had regularly changed and developed in the attempt to adapt itself to new conditions of race and climate. In every reaction the after influences of previous stages of development had always been strong enough to modify the artificial revival of archaic forms by an admixture of more familiar types. Thus development frequently moved, so to speak, in a circle whence there was no issue. But among the races of Eastern Asia an entirely different style of art had been growing up independently of the antique. Though originally it may have received a spurt from India it later became so totally separate that it could go its own way independently. The highest expression of this East-Asiatic style, as we have it in Japanese painting, began in the present day to tell on European art, thus bringing into one the two great streams of influence, from Europe and from Eastern Asia, the beginnings of which were separated by an interval of two thousand years. The growth of modern painting during the last thirty years cannot be understood without taking Japanese influence into account. The "Plein Air" method and "Impressionism" owe as much to the traditions of Eastern Asia as to fresh invention. Artists and amateurs of delicate perceptions, beginning with the English, soon realised that these Japanese had found out a purely illusionist system of decorative design consisting in imitation of natural objects, which they know how to distribute with fine taste, while in the process they have hit upon a simplified method of representation that makes it possible to employ vegetable forms with a freedom, spirit and sentiment practically unknown in conventional ornament. The supreme good taste of the Japanese has in our day secured a universal reception to their works of art, which formerly were prized merely as curiosities. Japanese artists showed a new way of looking at Nature and of applying the knowledge thus gained to artistic purposes, not scorning to utilise the attainments of painting for purposes of mere ornament. As a consequence the reactionary ban laid on Nature and proclaimed by so many verbose treatises is now removed, and the singular division between art and craft no longer holds good, at any rate in England, who in this case is the pioneer, though in some parts of the Continent the division is still in full force.

In the school of the Japanese we may learn to understand better than we have hitherto done some of the older phases of European art. We notice with surprise that as early as the second century A.D., the Japanese principle of ornament, consisting in illusionist imitations of plants and flowers freely grouped, had been discovered by the Romans and elaborated by them to a monumental art, the only difference being that the Japanese prefer an asymmetrical arrangement, while the Romans adhered to that law of symmetry with which they had so long been familiar in previous periods of art, and by its means marshalled the separate motives of the design so as to form an impressive whole. In the execution of their reliefs, such as our pillar with its climbing roses, they give evidence of a technical cleverness and a mature skill that we can hardly find equalled except in the small and delicate works executed by the Japanese in ivory or lacquer. Look back for a moment to the Augustan altar with plane foliage (Plate IV.). The branches, carefully worked out in detail, look as if they were stuck to the background. This is because the design has no relation to stone-work, but is modelled in clay on the flat, and then reproduced in stone, as though in a relief the material were of no consequence. The artist of the "Rose Pillar," on the contrary, has really produced a work in stone. On either front the surface of the pillar forms a frame within which the ground is hollowed out in such a manner that the vase can rise in the centre without quite attaining to the height of the frame. Only the buds and blossoms reach this level, and they are skilfully grouped so that opening roses lie close to the profile of the vase where the background is deepest, while those supposed to be waving in front of the vase, and those which curl up to the edge with their closed buds are worked in lower relief. All these raised and shimmering points of light are distributed with subtle symmetry in order to produce a pleasing alternation of light and shade. The light is at times subdued, at others it glances back from cunningly disposed angles; it spreads over the foliage as this lies upon the background with its varying planes, now in shallowest relief, now again lifted up or boldly undercut to favour the shifting play of light. The whole effect is of growing life, not bound down any longer by traditional practice which had stiffened into rule, but subject to a sovereign taste alone. It bears witness to a complete transformation of ancient art, or rather to the rise of a new art as far removed from the Greek as the Dutch art of the seventeenth century is removed from the Italian art of the Quattrocento. ✓

This change in the principle of art is not universally recognised simply because a real appreciation of its highest forms presupposes in the observer the kind of artistic sense that results only from training, or, at any rate, long practice. The results of the art of types, on the other hand, can be made intelligible even to a novice because they can be summed up in rules. Any one on being introduced for the first time to Polycleitus or Praxiteles can so far master their scheme of types as to be able to recognise other works by the same hand, but in the illusionist style, where each work of art is so to speak an individual, marks of identification for any particular master—Velasquez, for instance—are hard to determine with precision. Illusionist works of the first rank can reveal themselves only to a limited circle, because they can only be enjoyed in the original. Reproductions are without interest, since it is not the composition which is the main element in these works; the artist's struggle with values of colour and with light and shade it is that constitutes an indescribable dramatic spectacle which can never be imitated. For the copyist cannot enter into the body and soul of the artist in order to repeat with equal vividness the lightning flash of the fencing bout in which he has subdued Nature.

Again, the great majority of the public (the learned public included, and perhaps that more particularly) will turn away from works of which the subjects can neither form a topic for discussion nor be adequately described in words; they are naturally more attracted to those periods of culture when poetry and art supply each other's deficiencies, and the interest lies in a comparison of their treatment of the same material by different methods. Clever and learned criticism fills up the gaps in the extant poetical literature by means of works of art, or the gaps in the extant series of monuments by examining the poetic content of the lost work. This proceeding becomes meaningless as soon as art, whether painting or sculpture, rises to the point of development where it rejects with disdain all sources of extraneous interest, such as religion or poetry, and, sufficient to itself, becomes in its last stage an art only for artists, which scarcely heeds the applause of the multitude, but, like Dante's "Rachel," sits the whole day before the mirror, "de' suoi begli occhi veder vaga."

The student who fails to penetrate to the real essence of art will perceive in periods of subtle dilettantism such as that of the Roman Empire nothing but a rubbish-heap of eternal repetitions; to his usual quest after the "What"—in this case a demand for myth and poetry—there will be no response except from trite compositions noticeable in his eyes only for the echoes of Greek invention they may preserve, while the true artistic tendency of the time, supplying an answer to the question "How?" will for the most part escape him. The reception of Hellenism in Rome recalls in many respects the similar circumstances which attended the reception of Italian art in Central Europe and Spain. By the first half of the sixteenth century the motives of religious and genre painting had all been invented, and painters of the next century who had commissions from Church or Court for large canvases and frescoes could only keep Michel Angelo and Raphael, Corregio and Parmegianino, Titian and Veronese in view, and repeat their motives in endless variations. Any one, therefore, who attempted to judge seventeenth-century art by the novelty of motive displayed in compositions for churches and palaces would form an estimate of the work of the greatest painters who ever lived as mistaken as is the common view of Roman art. Such a one would probably allow the merit of novelty in historical painting only to the Flemish artists, who had boldly put in the place of the faded ideal beauties of the past their own raw-boned country clowns and stout wenches, for he would be attracted by the freshness of impression conveyed by this national and characteristic treatment. For in advanced periods of art the treatment is what aroused the real interest both of artist and art-lover. Modern art was brought to its highest perfection not by the Italian machinists, but by the creative force of the masters of illusionism, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Hals and their peers. Their subjects were simply portrait and landscape. The altar-pieces of the seventeenth century bear the same relation to older Italian pictures that Roman adaptations of Greek subjects (once the painful and praiseworthy exactitude of the Augustan copyists was over) bear to their prototypes. To appreciate the fact that among these adaptations are some in which, as in the pictures of Van Dyck or Murillo, old motives gain a peculiar charm by modern treatment, we have only to look at the nude figure of a girl from the Esquiline.* In the same way, too, Low Country and Spanish portraits are related to Italian portraits as Roman busts are related to Greek hermæ, with this limitation, that the Netherlanders and Spaniards differ from the old Italians in having completely attained to the quality of illusion, though both had attained to the quality of individuality, whereas Roman portraits differ in both respects from Greek portraits which remained consistently typical.

It would be a mistake to study Roman portraiture only from the busts of the Emperors, for they, with few exceptions, are copies turned out by the dozen, that have lost all the point of the illusion intended in the original. But hundreds, or rather thousands, of busts, representing unknown men and women of three centuries, survive, scattered over the Museums of Europe, and among them are hidden masterpieces enough to prove that the age which produced them was second to no other in regard to fecundity, and also, as the variety of treatment shows, in regard to the number of eminent artists. The masterpieces, however, are not classified, and their authors remain nameless. When these portraits were arranged in the Museums, the best places were kept for busts of Emperors and Empresses, Princes and Princesses, because the subjects were of general interest, while some of the finest pieces of work were not unfrequently relegated to obscure corners or to staircases. Thus many a portrait which as regards boldness of technique might rival the best Low Country or Spanish portraiture, is referred to in the catalogue as "inferior work," simply because few or none could appreciate the experienced touch, the result of accumulated training, which without visible effort and almost as if in sport, created by means of a few broad surfaces and detached chisel strokes a living picture that reveals the genius of a master.

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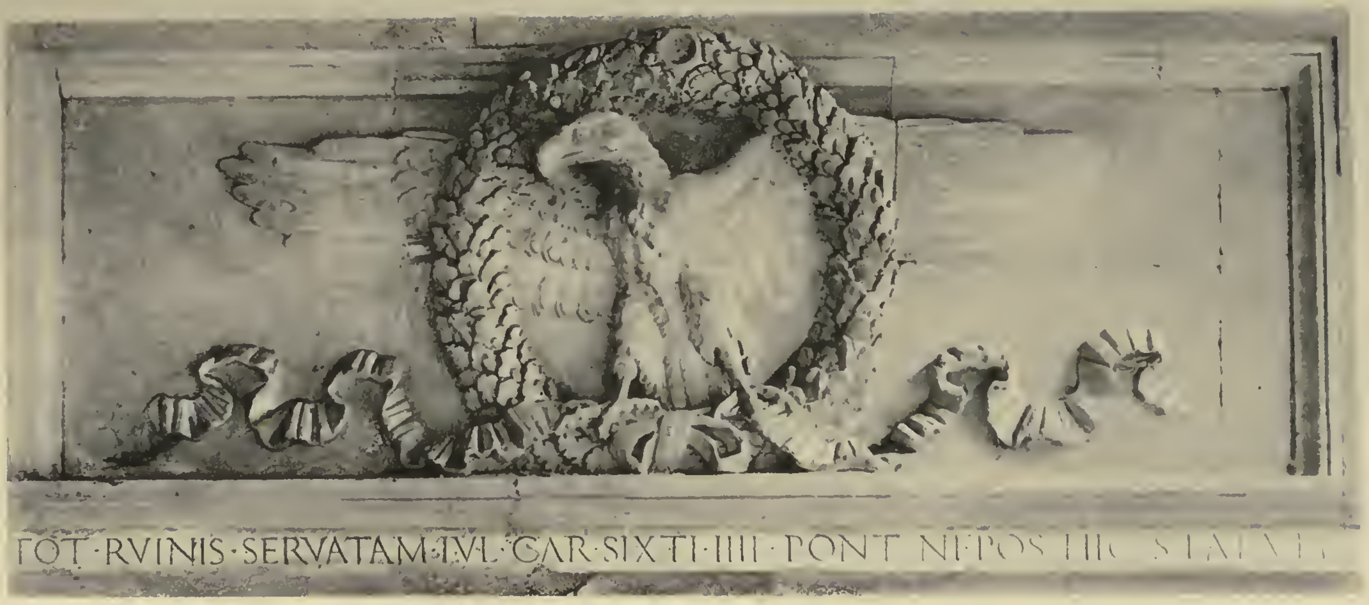
* [The celebrated *Esquiline Venus*, in the Palazzo dei Conservatori.]

The originality of these busts makes it difficult to diffuse a knowledge of them. Plaster casts give as inadequate an idea of their merits as an oleograph would of a picture by Rembrandt. They are creations of such decided individuality—I refer to the best only, for careless and pedantic work is to be found in this as in every period—that in each case the form and execution are regulated and governed by the hard or soft texture of the marble, by its fine grain or its crystalline translucency. A cast in another material becomes unintelligible, or at least loses all illusory effect. An exhaustive examination of the whole of this portraiture would probably disclose the existence not only of different schools, but even of individual masters, though these latter, like the anonymous German painters of the fifteenth century, could only be distinguished by the names of their chief works. In the seventeenth century, when modern portrait painting was approaching its perfection, appreciative collectors awoke to the full charm of the Roman busts, and a connoisseur of portraits, such as Cardinal Leopold de' Medici, the same who founded the collection of artists' likenesses in the Uffizi, chose out from the mass of Roman material over which his position gave him control, a number of Roman busts, almost each one of which is a masterpiece in its way. A seventeenth-century collection of this sort, put together with taste and judgment—though at present it is scattered about the Uffizi mixed up with inferior works and labelled with the names of great people—still affords the best means of gaining a thorough familiarity with the spirit


TOT·RVINIS·SERVATAM·IVL·CAR·SIXTI·IIII·PONT NEPOS HIC STATVIT

ROMAN EAGLE.
(SS. Apostoli, Rome.)

Plate IX.

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of these works. By the beginning of the second century this school of portraiture had produced its best works. Few portraits of any period could stand comparison in truth and breadth of conception with the "Nerva" of the Vatican Rotunda (Fig. 18). This statue is most probably an original and the creation of one of the first masters of the age. In the second century even though a certain straining after elegance makes itself felt in some of the busts, yet there is no decline in artistic treatment, and in the third century there were still great masters of portraiture. Even an inexperienced spectator can distinguish originals from copies by noticing the form of the eye. Schematic treatment of the pupil brands the work as a copy; in originals we find that either a series of different experiments is made to attain the effect of a living glance,* or else that the surface of the pupil is carefully prepared for colour, which was introduced everywhere to heighten the effect, and which eventually indeed was not infrequently replaced for the hair, face or drapery by marbles of different colours. Such particoloured busts, though they were only expensive toys, are valuable as affording reliable evidence of the effect originally intended to be produced by the colourless portraits that have come down to us. A single coloured bust—such, for example, as the so-called Lucilla, in the Emperors' room of the Capitoline Museum (No. 42)—explains at a glance many of the technical peculiarities in a whole series of portraits in the same collection. When, as on the headdress of the Flavian ladies (Fig. 21), we now see only staring white inarticulate masses of marble curiously riddled with bore-holes, originally, no doubt, the surface was coloured to represent black or blonde hair, while the high lights on the projecting parts would contrast with the shadows in the hollows so as to produce the effect of shining silken wavy locks. If the flesh was tinted in olive, brunette or rose, the lips and brows harmoniously toned and the iris skilfully painted, these busts must have conveyed a perfectly lifelike impression which, however, could not be unpleasant because the masterly chiselling had brought out only what was essential to the effect of life, and thus removed the work from the sphere of vulgar deception into the realm of artistic freedom.

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* For a contrary opinion see Helbig in his *Collections etc.* When he comes upon this individual treatment of the eye, which occurs with most frequency and variety at the time of Trajan, he dates the work back to the Republic. But portraits made during the Republic could only be executed in one of two styles, the earlier ones in the baroque Hellenistic manner, like the Pompeius in Palazzo Spada (Helbig 953), the later in that dry bald manner, to the further development of which we gave the name of Augustan. I should be at a loss to find, or to account for if found, a specifically Roman portrait style in marble busts such as Helbig assumes for this period of the Republic.

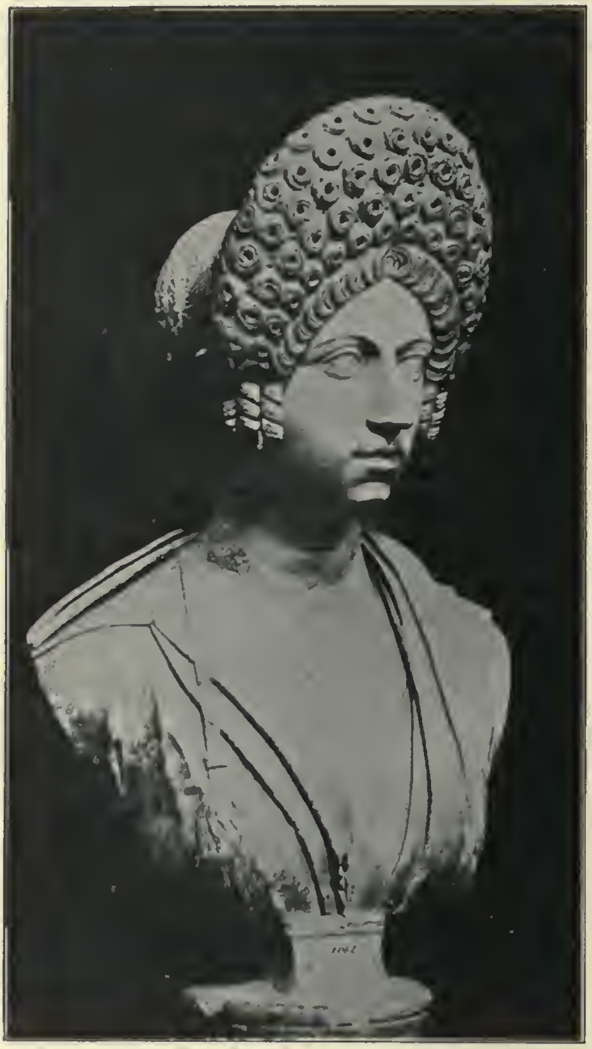

FIG. 21.—Lady with Headdress of the Flavian Period (after Bernoulli, *Icon.* II. pl. 13)

Polychromy was, of course, equally indispensable for the free vegetable-ornament we have described; we were compelled to assume it for the altar decorated with plane-tree branches, and we can trace its presence in a piece of decoration of the time of Trajan, which is the most magnificent extant example of its kind. This is the oak-wreath in the porch of SS. Apostoli,[*] placed there by Julius II. during his Cardinalate, and unsurpassed at the present time, notwithstanding all the attempts of the Renascence to produce something similar (Plate IX.). The motive of the eagle in the wreath, familiar as it is to Roman art, is here entirely created afresh by an original artist. As a rule the eagle sits in the wreath, but here he has just entered it, with pinions still spread as if in flight, and head outstretched. What vigour in the detail of foliage, feathers, and fluttering streamers, and yet, what repose and concentration in the whole! The laws of relief are no longer applied here, for the idea is that of a group which, though supported against the wall, is boldly displayed in front of it. The wreath is closed at the top by a jewel, now lost, but which was probably of coloured stone or glass. This means that the other parts were coloured also, and, assuredly, the effect would be still heightened if we imagine a dull green wreath with bright green acorns and rose-coloured ribbons, the eagle's brown wings, and the whitish plumage on its belly, to have detached themselves on a blue background, so that the frame might seem to surround an open window from the top of which the wreath was suspended, and towards which the eagle was in the act of flying through the clear air.* The principle that obtained in Roman art of substituting for ornament imitations of natural objects tastefully grouped and simulating real existence in the places assigned to them, is here embodied in a monumental representation of the symbols of Roman rule.

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[*] Matz. Duhn III., No. 3539, part of the left wing is restored.

We take a step further in the history of decorative design when we find imitations of plants no longer symmetrically or architectonically arranged but employed, as in a relief in the Lateran,† to cover whole surfaces without any special idea of direction (Plate X.). Lemon and quince branches laden with fruit are here freely treated like a kind of trellis laid over the background, which is visible only in order that the shadow thrown on it by the fruit and leaves may add to the effect of relief. The *bravura* with which the wrinkled skin of the lemons is rendered by means of a few sharp chisel-strokes was impossible to surpass, but it is equalled in numerous extant works of the same school. As an instance, I may mention some considerable fragments of an architrave of the second century, which I saw lying in the great court of the Museo delle Terme in April 1893;‡ the concavity of the frieze is filled in with a design of broken branches thrown in as if by chance and worked out with an eye to distant effect combined with a subtle observance of all the refinements of shadow, which impart to these mighty blocks the artistic charm of a delicate Japanese carving.

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* See what Helbig (p. 342), in discussing the Andromeda of the Capitol, quite correctly remarks about the painting of "gala reliefs."

† In room X. of the Lateran Museum. No. 722. Not given in Benndorf–Schöne.

‡ I hear they have since been removed.

At the end of the second century there came a pause in the process of development. It is easy to understand that refinement carried to this extent could not last indefinitely. Accordingly in the third century a backward step is made; a relief *en creux* comes into being, which with its deep undercutting is rich enough as decoration, but is pictorial rather than plastic in its effect. The best example is a pilaster in the Lateran where Erotes (now cut away) are clambering among the vine branches to pluck the grapes (Plate XI.). To the editors of the Lateran catalogue it recalled Chinese carving in soapstone.* We noticed how the principle of Roman decorative work tallies in the main with that of Eastern Asia. In fact, while their masterpieces are Japanese exalted to Roman dignity, the last development of Roman art corresponds to the art of the Chinese, where the East-Asiatic style which in Japan is to this day still capable of free development has long since become fossilised. In the busts of the third century we can see the identical tendency noted in the vegetable ornament; the hair is represented as an almost unbroken mass on which the separate wisps and partings are afterwards incised as if with the pencil.

The illustrations selected in order to show the development of an art of sculpture with illusionist aims among the Romans were purposely taken from among plant designs, because in them Roman art appears in complete independence and there is no mistaking the novelty of its creations. It is not so simple to explain the illusionist treatment in the case of the busts—partly because with only a limited number of reproductions, the student insufficiently acquainted with the originals might confuse the peculiarities of treatment with the characteristics of the models, and partly because, owing to the prevailing prejudice against Roman art, the motives of Hellenistic art that frequently occur in historical reliefs might cause the originality of the treatment to be overlooked. But there can no longer be any question of imitation of the Greeks in that Roman vegetation which spreads and climbs over pillars, vases, and urns, and the large number of well preserved

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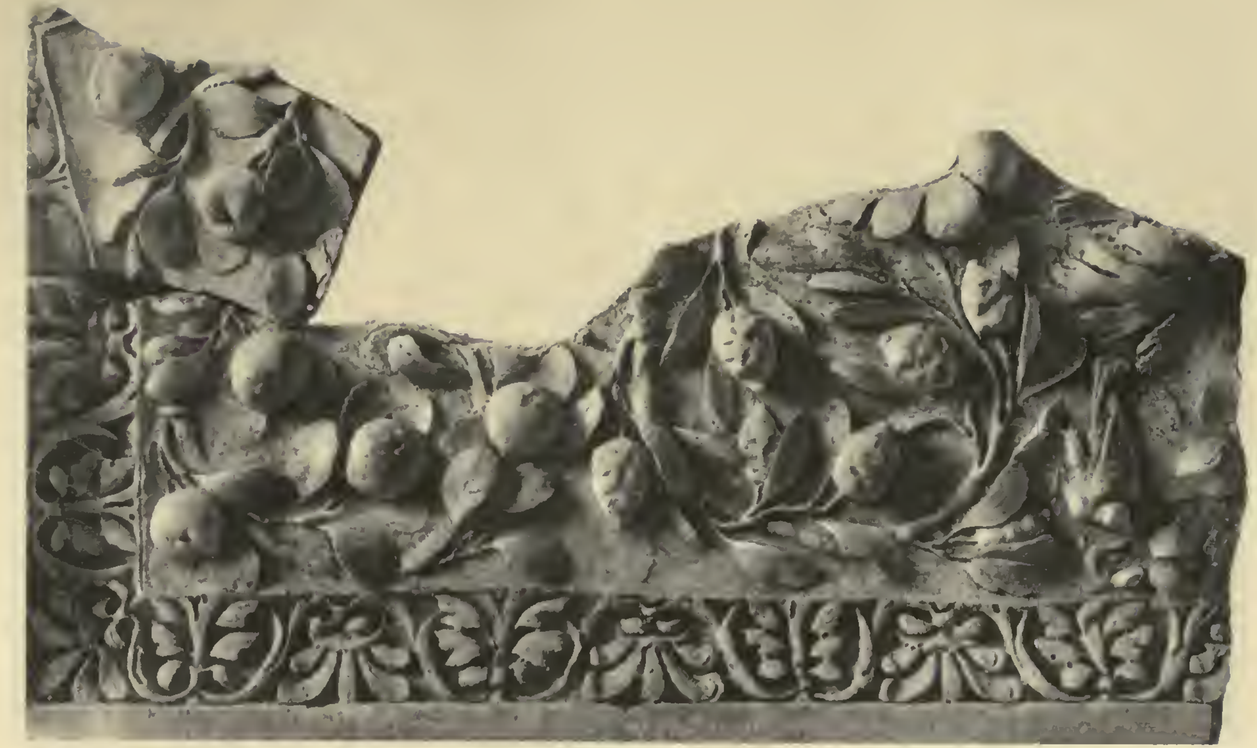
* Benndorf-Schöne, p. 199 f., No. 320.



RELIEF WITH QUINCE AND LEMON FOLIAGE.

(Lateran.)

Plate X.

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examples in every collection, enables us to penetrate the secret of this ornamentation, the invention of which was one of the greatest achievements of Roman art. The examples which we have given from the Augustan altar with the plane foliage down to the vine pilaster, find their counterpart in the parallel evolution of historical relief, from the *Ara Pacis* to the perfection of the Trajanic monuments, and back again to the low level of the work on the arch of Septimius Severus. The evolution of the illusionist style through this series of historical experiments is as significant of the national character of Roman plastic art as its conquest of the vegetable kingdom, or the elaboration of a definite portrait style. It has been asserted, it is true, that what we regard as an achievement of Roman art had really been attained before by the Hellenistic, and that Roman triumphal sculptures should be regarded "almost as a return to a simpler manner, not as the beginning of a tendency which had really reached its goal some time before."* This opinion is too weighty for us to pass it by without grappling with the conception expressed therein of the historical development of relief. The tomb of the Julii at St. Rémy, erected at the beginning of the reign of Augustus, is considered by the adherents of this view to mark the final stage of Hellenistic sculpture in relief; its reliefs† were interpreted as "a picturesque mob of figures in which the silhouette no longer plays a part."‡ It is true that it is not the silhouette, if we use the term in its original meaning as synonymous with the outline of an isolated profile, which determines the impression in this case; but the silhouette in a wider sense, meaning the outline of the separate figures constituting the composition, is so unmistakable an element in the design, that the plastic relief of the figures seems only to disturb the effect (Fig. 22).

The purely linear conception of the design becomes evident in the hindmost figures, which are graved in simple outline on the ground. The foreshortenings also of the horses, as they spring forward or rear, could only have been elaborated in line-drawing; they have no analogy in any sort of relief work proper. When it is suggested that an examination of the Roman sarcophagi* would throw light upon these motives, we are inclined to answer by asking whether in that case the Roman sarcophagi of the second and third centuries A.D. are to be looked upon as monuments likely to illustrate the development of Greek relief from the Pergamene Gigantomachia down to the first century. The composition of the relief from the tomb of the Julii comes out clearly in the old publications by Laborde,† which reproduce in line drawing the essential elements of the design and are therefore more useful in this respect than casts or photographs.‡ A similar end may be attained by tracing the outlines of the composition or even of a single group on the reproductions in the *Antike Denkmäler*. At once the medley of figures disappears; in place of redundant confusion we have a clear, rich, measured composition, which in general scope and smaller details alike, recalls the great mosaic with the "Battle of Alexander" (Fig. 23). Notice, for instance, the formation of the groups and then compare the horse springing inwards in the Boar Hunt (Fig. 22) and in the battle-scene of the north side, with the same horse in the "Battle of

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* Alexander Conze: "Ueber das Relief bei den Griechen," *Berl. Sitzungsberichte*, 1882.

† *Antike Denkmäler* I., Taf. 16, 17.

‡ Alexander Conze, *loc. cit.*

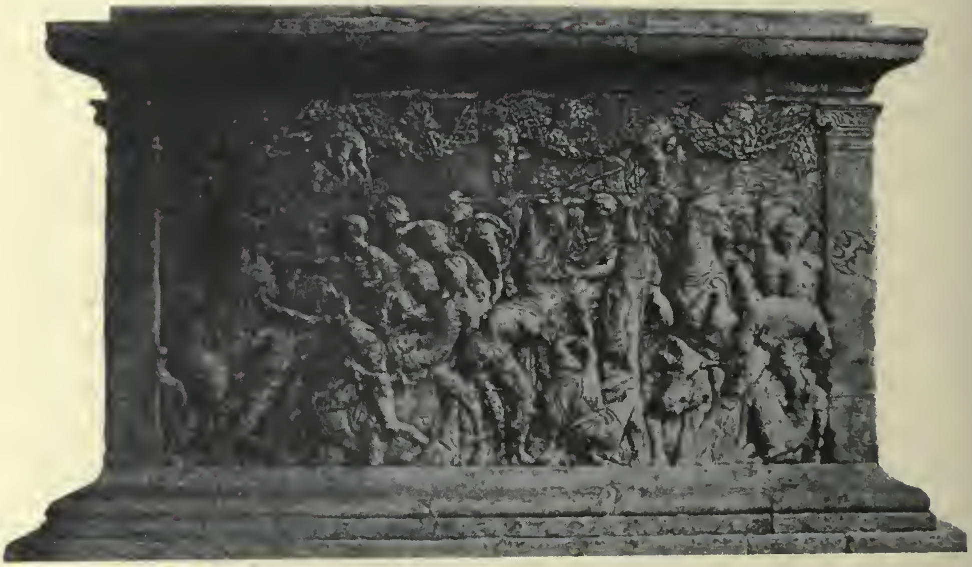

FIG. 22.—Boar Hunt from the Tomb of the Julii at Saint Rémy (After *Antike Denkmäler*, I. pl. 17)

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* Hübner, *Jahrbuch des arch. inst.* III. 10.

† Alex. Laborde, *Les Monuments de la France*, Paris, 1816–36, I., Taf. 35, 36.

‡ [Laborde's drawing is unfortunately too faint to admit of satisfactory reproduction; I have therefore been compelled to take Fig. 22 from the plate in the *Denkmäler*.—ED.]

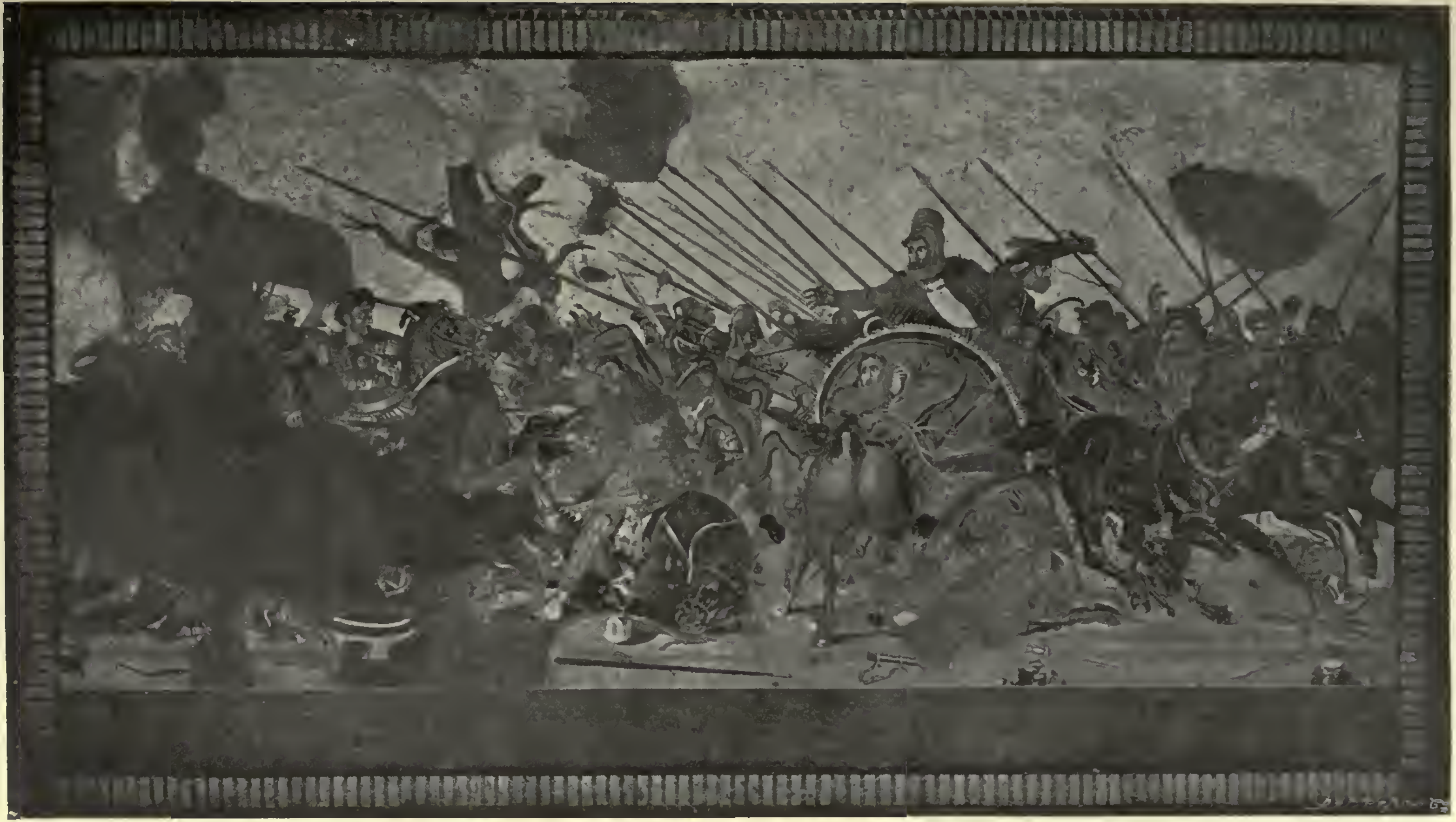

FIG. 23.—Battle of Alexander on the Mosaic in Naples (Photograph Alinari)

Alexander." Even the lopped and withered tree dividing the broad upper space occurs in both compositions, and would be looked for in vain on an ordinary relief. It is Greek painting which furnished the prototypes. What we have here are really relief-paintings, that is to say, paintings awkwardly translated into relief to the detriment of their own characteristic effect. The models (perhaps slightly modified only in the two Infantry fights) appear to me to be compositions belonging to that period of Greek baroque painting of which the "Battle of Alexander," is otherwise the only extant example. The model for the Boar Hunt must have been fully the equal of this picture in merit. It only remains to ask what led to the feeble amateurish reproduction in the reliefs of the monument of the Julii. The sunken contours by means of which the outlines of the design were transferred to the basis of the monument recall terra-cotta work. The moulds for reliefs, after being taken off the modelled positive, were frequently gone over before the baking, when the pointed end of the modelling-stick worked in a number of details. Most of the so-called "Campana reliefs," a series that came into existence in Italy, were finished in this way; hence the method is purely Italic. It was a right instinct that suggested to Lohde an analogy in style and treatment between the sepulchral relief of the Julii and the battle scenes on Etruscan cinerary urns.* Conze himself had previously made the very happy observation that the chief group of the "Battle of Alexander" was borrowed for Etruscan cinerary urns.† In short, the urn-makers of Etruria translated Greek baroque pictures into reliefs in the same way as did the stonemasons of the tomb of the Julii. In most of the passionate and agitated compositions which decorate these urns there are doubtless preserved to us motives of Greek painting of the second and third centuries B.C.

Various attempts were made to acclimatise Greek art in the West, and the persistent effort which culminated in the Augustan style was by no means the first attempt of the kind. We have seen how the artists of Luni made Greek baroque sculpture their own by adding local details to a foreign composition. The Etruscans may have been

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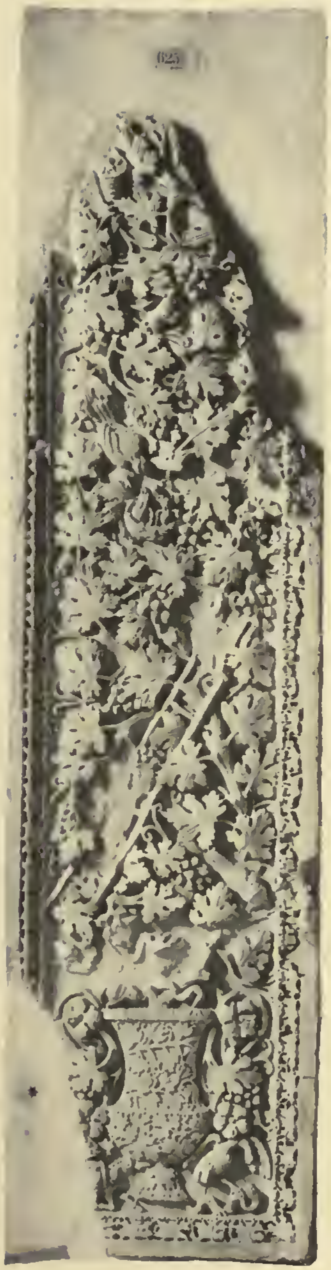
* Lohde, *Rheinische Jahrbücher*, 1867, p. 145.

† *Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, Ser. IV., Plate 8.



RELIEF DECORATED WITH VINE-BRANCHES.
(Lateran.)

Plate XI.

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acting under a similar impulse when they went to Greek paintings rather than to reliefs for models for their urn designs. The tendency towards illusionism, always latent in their art, made the former appear much more serviceable for their purpose than the latter. The artists of the tomb at Saint Rémy may perhaps have argued in precisely the same manner. Few examples of the quiet "Empire" development of Greek art in the first century had reached so far; the style of the reliefs in the Palazzo Spada had remained unfamiliar to them, and, like the Etruscan designers of urns, they borrowed for their purpose prototypes from Greek baroque painting. Thus Lohde's suggestion of the collaboration of Tuscan artists upon this monument must be taken seriously.* The whole structure of the monument, the excessive projection of the capitals, the statues of the dead placed in a kind of cage, the mixed style of the reliefs, all betray an uncertainty of artistic method such as we might expect from immigrant craftsmen working at a distance from their native art centres. On the other hand, we have an example of provincial exclusiveness holding its own for generations; for something as peculiarly individual as this treatment of relief occurs on the arch at Orange,† which architecturally also is akin to the Augustan arch at Saint Rémy. Both arches are purely Roman in plan. Roman, too, are the wreaths made of varied foliage naturalistically worked, which occur on both,‡ and connect them with a tendency of the Augustan style. The reader may remember that on the much later Italic tomb of the Haterii, we found a hesitating attempt at narrative relief, differing, it is true, from the relief of the tomb of the Julii, but having this in common with it, that both sought their prototypes in painting. Now whether we suppose the builders to have been natives of Tuscan descent,§ or to have merely worked under a Tuscan overseer, they certainly were not Greeks. Greeks would never have produced those sea dragons with flowers instead of heads[*] (Fig. 24). The large relief is decorated at its upper edge with wreaths carried by little hovering Cupids. "Their originals," says Hübner, "must certainly be looked for in the best period of the fourth century." With the confidence of ghost-seers in a fourth dimension the critic evolves imaginary prototypes from his own misty conception of the fourth century, while the actual repetition is to be found in the Etruscan town of Caere. It is the relief from the theatre there, representing the patron divinities of Etruria, and ornamented in like manner at the top with wreaths carried by hovering Cupids.[†] And here, just as in the Ara of Manlius,[‡] found at the same place, we come in the treatment of the relief upon certain resemblances to the tomb of the Julii, though the pieces from Caere, which date from the reign of Claudius, display a better execution dependent upon Roman art. We need only note, for instance, how the throne of the patron-goddess of Vulci, who is represented in high relief, is lightly indicated in the background by means of grooves. Whatever, then, may have been the origin of the monument of Saint Rémy, whether it was the work of a Tuscan in Gaul or the outcome of Tuscan art training received by the Gauls at an earlier period, it certainly affords remarkable proof of

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* Lohde (*loc. cit.*), p. 145; Conze holds the other view (*loc. cit.*), p 572.

† Reproduction of the sculptures of the arch at Orange in Brunn-Bruckmann, 92–95.

‡ I know the two arches from Laborde's illustrations only, I. Pl. 35, 48–50, but Robert von Schneider, who has seen both, has kindly sent me an exhaustive description, which lays stress on the wreaths of foliage as the most admirable feature on the whole group of buildings.

§ Otto Hirschfeld, *C.I.L.* XII. p. 521, shows that immigration of colonists from Umbria and Etruria to the neighbouring town of Narbo took place in A.U.C. 636 and 708.

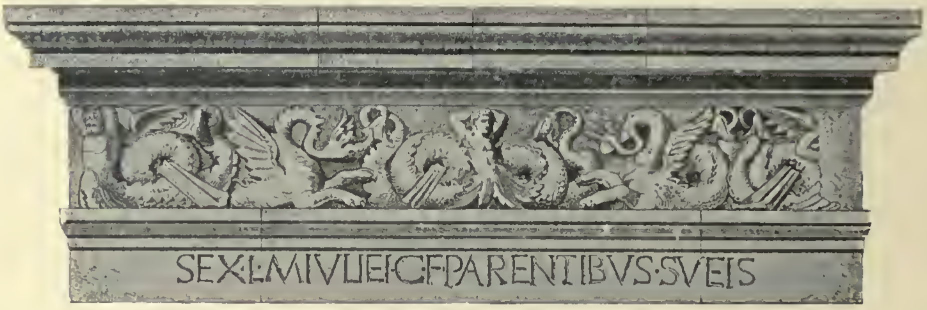

FIG. 24.—Dragons with Flower-heads; from the Tomb of the Julii at Saint-Rémy (After *Antike Denkmäler*, I. pl. 15)

a transition period, and shows what shape Roman art might have taken if the Augustan style had never come into existence.

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[*] *Antike Denkmäler* I., Taf. 15, above. The dragon on the left distinctly shows that a dragon's head must have been the original idea, and that it was represented as a plant by mistake. The dragon on the right has the developed palmette flower.

[†] In the Lateran, published *Annali dell' Istituto* 1842, Tav. d' agg. C; Benndorf-Schöne, p. 130, No. 212; more recent literature in Helbig's *Collections of Antiquities in Rome*, I. p. 483.

[‡] In the Lateran, published *Monumenti dell' Istituto* VI. 10; Benndorf-Schöne, p. 134, No. 216.

The Augustan style, however, was there with its countless monuments, and out of its dry naturalism was to be developed the illusionist Triumphal relief, which has nothing in common with Hellenistic Baroque, and is only indirectly connected with Hellenism through the intermediary of the Augustan style, which is itself the last off-shoot of Hellenistic art, though a withered and pining one, like a leafless branch in winter.

The artist who designed the processions of the *Ara Pacis* had, we may remember, not succeeded in freeing himself from the influence of the clay models in vogue at the time. He therefore engraved on the ground, as a cameo-cutter might, a series of figures with sharply defined edges, but in very low relief, and proceeded to model in front of these a second series almost completely in the round, which move in front of the back row, upon which, so soon as the light falls upon them, they cast their shadows. This matter of shadow must make us pause awhile if we wish to understand the development of Roman relief from the *Ara Pacis* onwards. An art like that of the Greeks intent upon the type could, even in the case of relief, afford to ignore effects of shadow. It could entirely disregard the cast shadow which had no power to disturb illusion where none was intended. But the case was different when relief began to aim at pictorial effect, and consequently had to take into account that important factor in painting, the cast shadow. The frieze of Pergamon with the "Battle of the Giants" is just at this stage. The composition was condensed, the background disappeared, and the shadows cast by the projecting parts of the figures, which, though worked only in one layer, have considerable depth, fall either on the figure itself or on the one facing it, thus emphasising the perspective, in fact the shadows become an essential factor in the pictorial effect. An entire impression of reality was neither intended nor attained. No one was meant to imagine that he saw the gods and giants actually fighting up there; nor was the principle forgotten, which required of all Greek sculptures on buildings a certain conformity to the lines of the architecture. On the small frieze the figures are not crowded, and yet the effect of painting was aimed at there also. Accordingly those parts of the background left free when the composition was complete were filled up as in a picture with landscape and architecture, and an attempt was even made in certain delicately treated parts to give in relief the effects of aerial perspective. Now, shadows cast by figures in high relief in front would have been detrimental to the perspective effect; for a strong shadow falling on the landscape background betrays the fact that the background does not really recede, and this not only destroys the pictorial impression intended but conveys a contrary one. Consider, for instance, the bird hovering in a free space (Fig. 25), and what its effect would be were it to cast a shadow on the surrounding air. Reliefs of this kind could show to advantage only in a diffused light, therefore the small frieze was placed in a colonnade where the direct rays of the sun could never touch it. This was a clever contrivance, but nothing more. How could a style that shunned the sunlight ever have grown to maturity in the South?

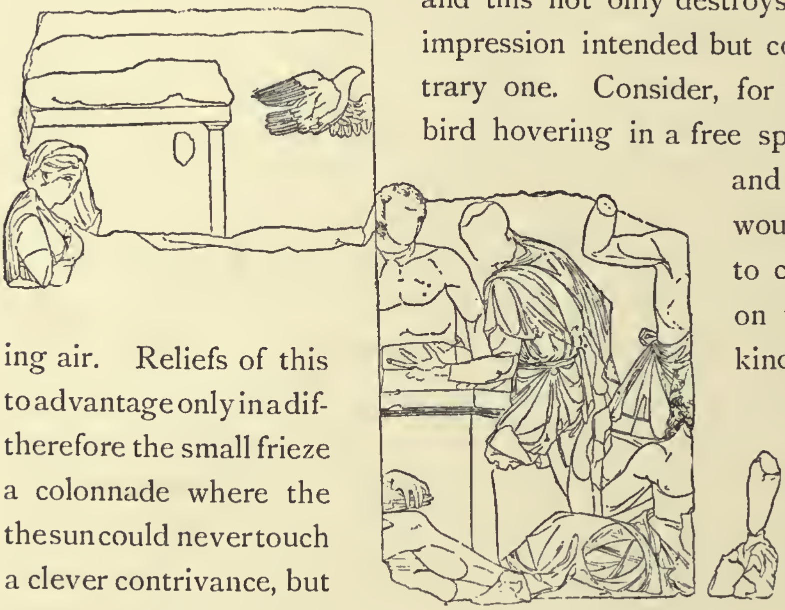

FIG. 25.—Fragment from the small Pergamene Frieze (After *Jahrbbuch des Archäologischen Instituts*, III. p. 93)

Greek art, though it had now at last reached a point where a transition to the illusionist style seemed inevitable, was owing to the innermost conditions of its being incapable of the change. With experiments such as we have described, it had reached the limits of its capability in this direction, and a reaction must necessarily be the next stage. Greek baroque had exhausted itself; the unsatisfactory solution of the problem attempted in the small Pergamene frieze could not long remain concealed, and a revulsion took place of which we see the results in the stiff elegance of the so-called "Hellenistic" reliefs of the first century.

In one class of these reliefs the background is treated as a wall upon which fall the shadows of the figures that are worked out in relief in front, precisely as would occur in Nature if real people stood in front of a wall. This method is a very favourite one with the dry naturalistic school of the Augustan age. Thus Pasiphaë stands before a house-front (Fig. 26), Diomed before the side façade of a temple, Icarus before a wall of masonry (Fig. 27), Endymion before a precipitous rock (above Fig. 13), and so on. Nor was this method given up when the landscape background became more elaborate. The front figures which cast shadows were still placed before an expanse of some kind of masonry, as, for example, the peasant driving the cow to market (above Fig. 15). The shadow still falls there exactly as in Nature, and this whole class irresistibly reminds us of *tableaux vivants.* The treatment is closely inspired by the clay model where the shallow background is first worked in on the flat, then the figures, which may have been finished in the round, are stuck on, and lastly the model is cleverly imitated in marble.

Another way of solving the shadow problem was by reserving within the landscape a hollow space resembling a cave scooped out behind and around the principal group; the Grimani reliefs are the classic instance of this method. Here the shadows cast by the figures in the round, whether of man or beast, fall into the hollow, and supposing this to have been, as needless to say it was, painted a dark colour, the impression of depth was intensified, and the shadow once more helped out the pictorial effect. Relief had reached this stage when the artist of the *Ara Pacis* took it up. He employed both expedients. In the small frieze with the sacrificial animals he adopted without modification the method last described, while in the large frieze, representing a procession of priests and nobles, he tried to improve upon the method employed in the architectural backgrounds. Those Hellenistic reliefs of course could only admit figures disposed side by side on *one* plane only. Had their designers essayed a variation they would have fallen into the confusion of the Pergamene frieze representing the story of Telephus. At this point the artist of the

Ara Pacis made an innovation; he allowed the figures in high relief of the front row to cast their shadows on a back row of figures which were worked so flat on the ground that they could no longer cast any shadows but stood like silhouettes against the sky. Suppose the two rows of figures to have been variously coloured and the ground blue, a pictorial effect could not but ensue. The background would appear to recede and the second row of figures would look as if they were casting a shadow on the earth behind them where it could not be seen. Here was a possible starting-point for illusionist relief, which as it receded might be filled up with figures in all directions; but Greek artists had never been able to make up their minds to develop this style.

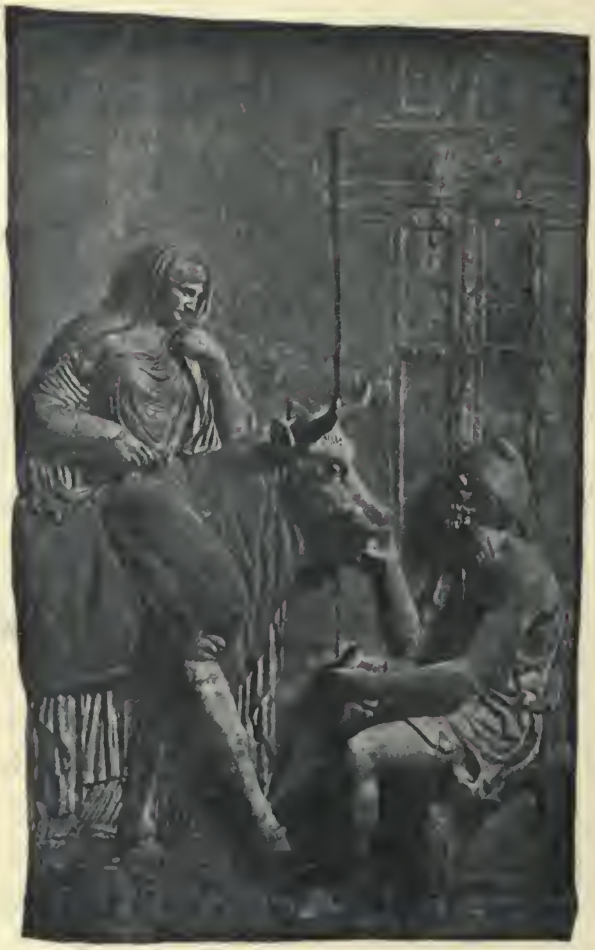
FIG. 26.—Augustan Relief in Palazzo Spada: Pasiphae and Daedalus (After Schreiber, *Hell. Reliefbilder*)

The earliest evidence of an attempt to elaborate this manner is afforded by the reliefs of the arch of Claudius in the Villa Borghese, representing the Emperor surrounded by officers and soldiers (Fig. 28).* The front row of figures is worked in high relief as on the *Ara Pacis,* and the row behind is cut in low relief on the background.

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* Philippi, "Ueber die Römischen Triumphalreliefs," *Abhandlungen der phil.-hist. Classe der Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, VI. 1872, p. 271 ff., Taf. I. Same writer, *Annali dell' Istituto* 1875, pp. 42–48; *Monumenti dell' Istituto* X., tav. XXI.

In this layer of low relief the artist tried to surpass the *Ara Pacis.* Instead of the one row of heads as there, we have here two rows of profiles, the second row being placed above the first so as to be a whole head higher than the figures of the foreground. This modification, then, was purely a matter of drawing and the intended pictorial effect of depth, as if three rows of figures were standing one behind the other, was not attained. The device so skilfully imitated in the *Ara Pacis,* of placing the solid figures of the foreground, which cast shadows, in front of the shadowless figures of the second plane, in order to convey the idea of distance in the background, was in this case, with these two rows at the back, grossly misunderstood. We are here in presence of one of those Italian attempts to combine the pictorial and plastic styles; the experiment, however, turned out even less well than on the Etruscan urns or on the tomb of the Julii, where paintings were simply translated straight into relief.

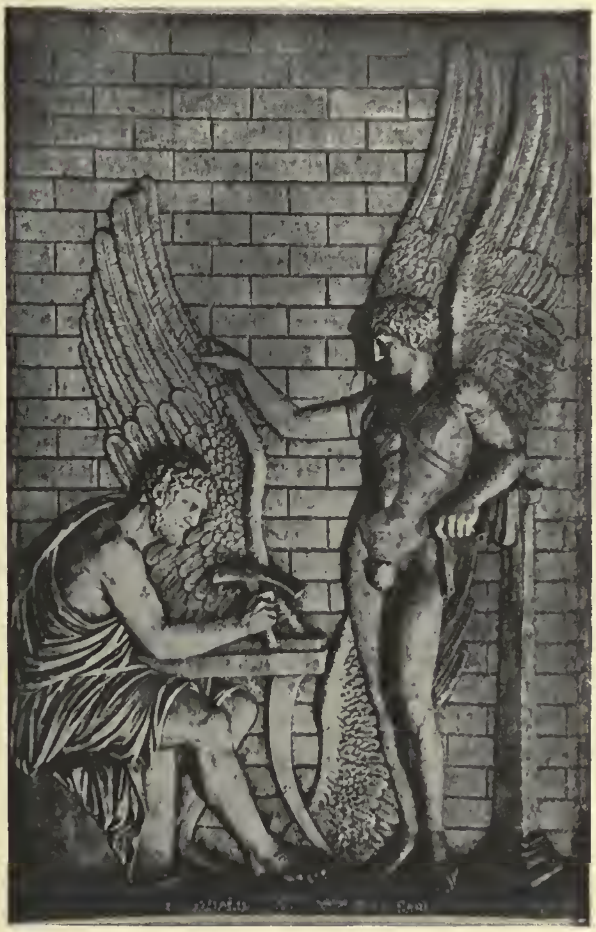

FIG. 27.—Augustan Relief in Villa Albani: Daedalus and Icarus (After Schreiber, *Hell. Reliefbilder*)

This first attempt, then, to develop further, in a Latin manner, the Hellenistic-Roman style of the *Ara Pacis* had failed, but the failure was due principally to the clumsiness of the sculptor, who could not even have cut an eye in profile correctly, still less contribute anything to a new departure in style. All he could do was to galvanise motives of sculpture and painting into an inorganic semblance of life from which good taste must revolt. The first failure, however, did not discourage other experiments, and already the arch of Titus shows how a stroke of genius solved the problem of producing a completely illusionist effect in relief work. (Figs. 29 and 30.)

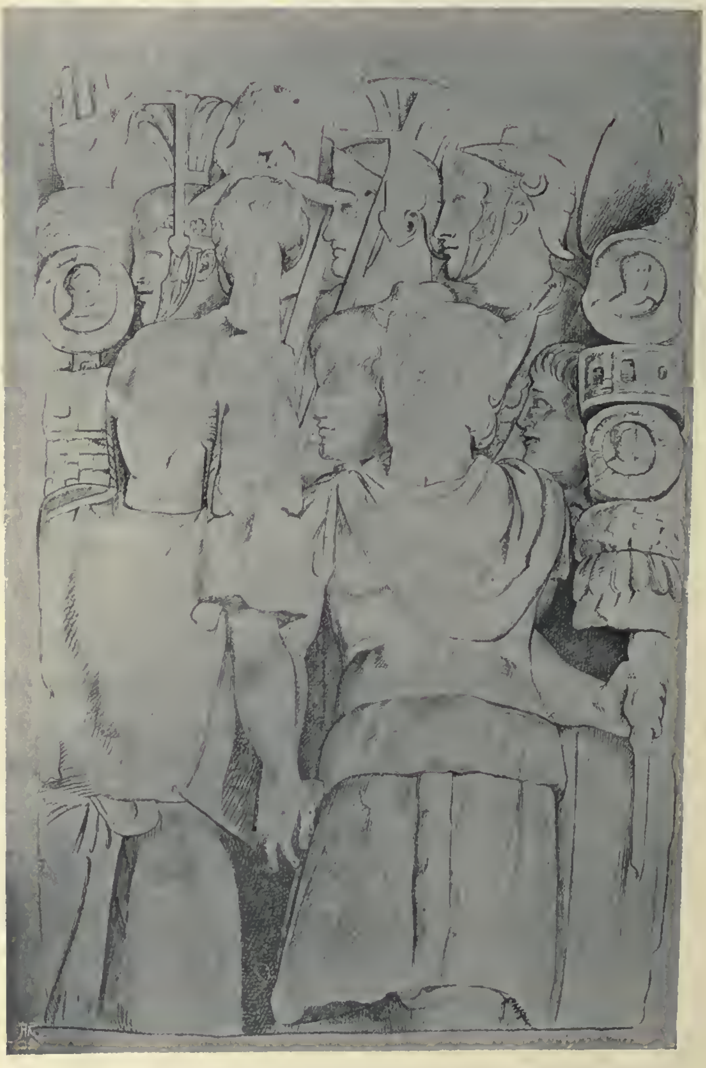

FIG. 28.—Relief from the Arch of Claudius; Villa Borghese (After Philippi)

Let us turn first to the relief inside the arch on the right, which represents the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem being carried in the triumphal procession (Fig. 29).* We see at once that the treatment is founded, not on earlier Greek sculpture, but this time also on the *Ara Pacis*. The principle of shadows there invented was retained, the figures of the back row being worked as flat as possible on the background, so that when the shadows of the front row of figures fell on them and they themselves cast no shadow, the illusion was created that

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* See also Philippi, *loc. cit.*, Taf. 3.

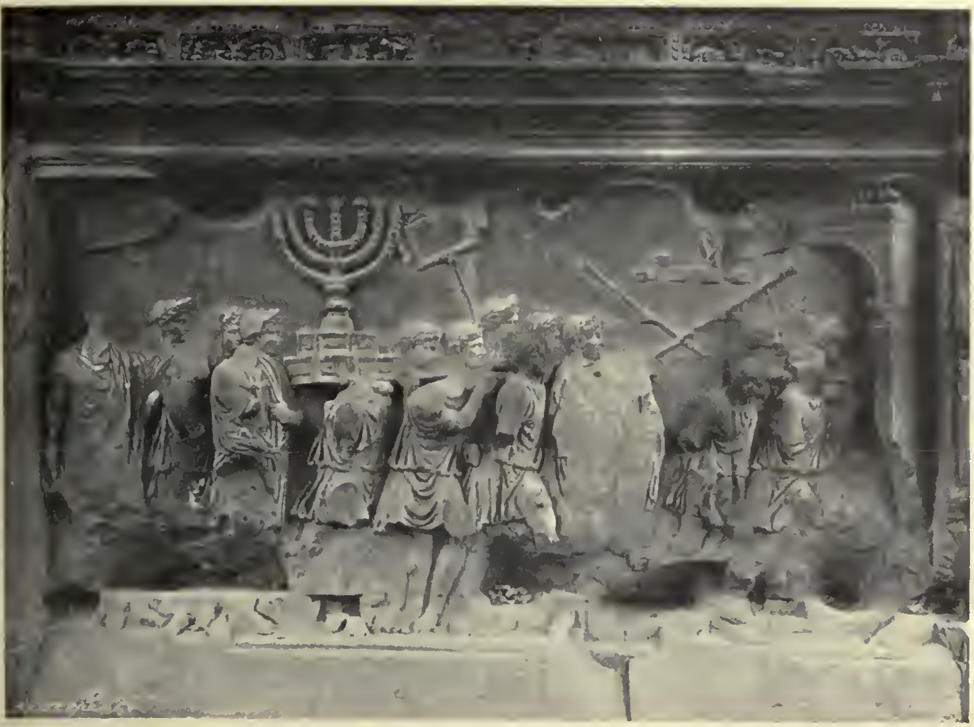

FIG. 29.—The Spoils of the Temple, from the Arch of Titus Photograph Alinari)

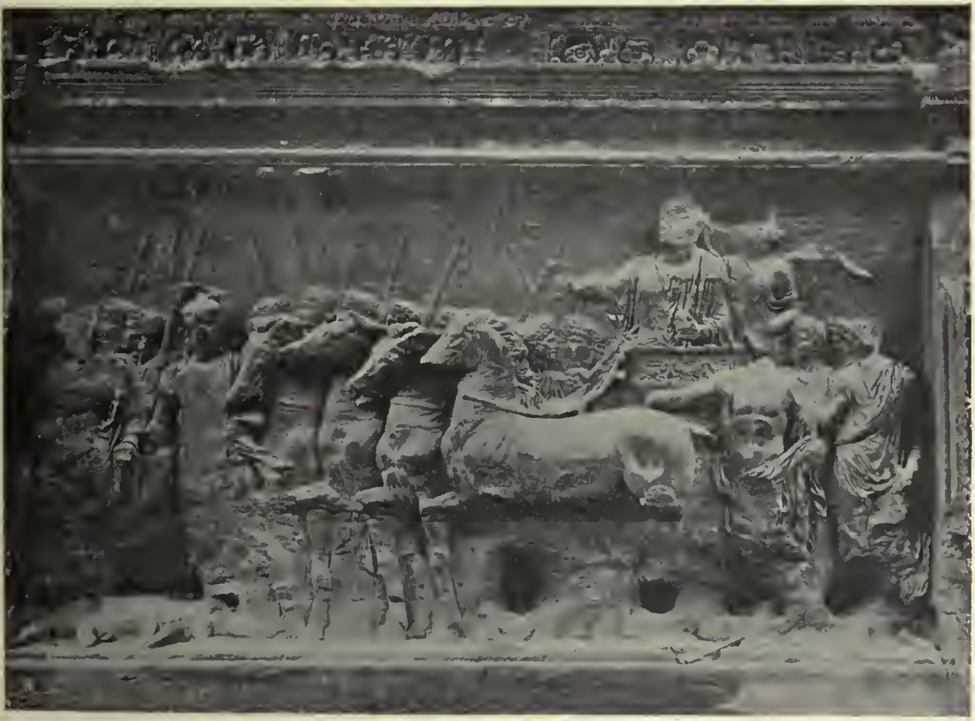

FIG. 30.—Triumph of Titus, from Arch of Titus (Photograph Alinari)

their shadow fell on the earth behind them, and thus that the background vanished behind them. On the other hand the imitation of the clay model, which was detrimental to the full plastic effect in the *Ara Pacis*, is given up. On the arch of Titus the reliefs are worked in real stone style out of blocks, whose original surface, preserved at the upper and lower edge, limits the depth of the relief. The latter exhibits a subtle variation of depth from the figures of the front plane to the flatly worked heads of the lowest layer on their vanishing background. The common statement that the artist worked in three planes is not quite accurate, because the swellings and sinkings of the surface are very subtle and depend on the variety of effect to be gained, but not on definite levels. All relation of the separate groups and figures to the architecture, such as is maintained in the Pergamene sculptures, is here ignored or, more exactly, purposely avoided. A frame is simply thrown open and through it we look at the march past of the triumphal procession. We are to believe that the people are moving there before our eyes; we are no longer to be reminded of pictures; rather the plastic art tries to attain by its own methods the same effect as would a highly developed art of painting—the impression of complete illusion. Beauty of line, symmetry of parts, such as a conventional art demands, are no longer sought for. Everything is concentrated on the one aim of producing an impression of continuous motion. Air, light and shade, are all pressed into the service and must help to conjure up reality. The relief has "Respirazion" like the pictures of Velasquez. But as it is the real and not painted air that filters in between the figures, it follows that all the master's art is brought to bear on such a skilful arrangement of groups as, in spite of the compression, may allow air to pass between, above and around the figures, thus helping to supplement the modelling even as the sunlight, which, when it breaks in, awakens these figures to magic life. To allow natural illumination to contribute to the perfecting of the artistic effect was one of the boldest innovations. On the success of this startling experiment depends the whole marvellous effect of this relief, unequalled except in the "Spinning Girls" in Madrid. The task which Egypt and the East had in olden times set themselves of reproducing *extracts from real life with all possible truth to Nature* by the simplest means had been interrupted awhile by the noble drama of Hellenism, with its ideal representations of spiritual and physical powers; but now that the interlude was over, the old task was resumed and brought to satisfying completeness by the most refined methods of a style aiming at illusionism. Thus for the first time the circle of artistic activity was rounded. Coming centuries could now work at the formation of new ideals and the life thus founded on their supremacy could, when presented by observers of genius, again call forth illusion.

In front of the golden table for the shew-bread, which is swaying past on a litter borne by eight men, one of the company suddenly halts to turn and look along the procession behind him.* Notice how it is just this sudden halt of a figure on the front plane that first emphasises by contrast the continued march of the bearers on the next plane, some of whom vanish behind the back of the pausing figure, while others have already passed by. To pursue into detail a study of the means used by the artist to produce an impression of continuous movement would mean an analysis of each figure with respect to its individual relief, execution, and movement, and also in relation to the other figures and to the whole design; for in the wise choice and distribution of everything that could contribute to bring out the appearance of momentary movement lies the proof of the mastery over his material possessed by this artist, who certainly chose his means as carefully as did the conventionalising stylists, but with a different end in view. The result is a rhythmic—the exact contradictory of a conventional—composition. The distribution of the masses, their relation to the frame, the accentuation of the movements most important for the desired effect, all these bring about a harmonious whole which produced its own special laws, though these may be as distinct from the laws governing Hellenistic composition as Rubens is from Raphael.

In one place the illusion is not complete. The vessels which are being carried along throw shadows on the air, and thus appear to disturb the intended vanishing effect of the background. Colour must have been the only way out of the difficulty. The arch on the right of the relief is only half indicated plastically, and must have been finished in painting; thus to this day it proves the employment of colouring which, judging from the stage reached by painting at that time, could only have been effected by observation of the local colours. This led, if we carry the argument to its logical conclusion, to gilding of the sacred vessels. Now the sunshine falling on the tables, trumpets, candlesticks, &c., would so strongly attract the eye by its brilliance that the shadows thrown on the background might, if they did not disappear, at least pass unobserved.

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* The figure is much injured, but its movement is clear.

Those of us who either as artists or critics have taught and accustomed ourselves to eliminate all idea of colour from sculpture, feel, owing to long habit, thoroughly at home among unpainted reliefs, and do not miss the colouring in the triumphal procession of the arch of Titus; nay, we might be startled if we were suddenly confronted with the perfect work in all the brilliant shimmer of its original hues. Yet if we want to get a clear notion of its effect as intended by the artist we cannot afford to disregard the colour, but, in order entirely to appreciate the monument, must strive to obtain a notion of the manner in which colouring was employed.

A further digression will be necessary in order to justify our assertion that the painting in this relief was executed throughout with complete attention to local colouring. I will begin by quoting what Conze says on the relation between painting and sculpture in his treatise on Greek relief: "It [Greek relief] appears more akin to painting than we were at first inclined to grant. As a fact, it is more correctly classified as a special kind of painting than as a branch of sculpture, and, at any rate, it is as reasonable to speak of the pictorial character of Greek reliefs as of the relief-like characteristics of ancient painting, which has so habitually been done. Above all, must we remember a truth universally conceded to-day, that in Greek art there was no such sharp division between sculpture as representation by form and painting as representation by colour, as we moderns have introduced both in our practice and in our theory. It is, therefore, all the less surprising to find that, although from time to time one of them may be emphasised at the expense or even to the exclusion of the other, they really develop together in the growth of surface design."* On the Attic grave reliefs Conze could ascertain that colour was used partly to enhance and partly to supplement relief, but their state of preservation was not perfect enough to indicate what the painting was like. Our conception of an harmonious development of Greek art would go to pieces, were we to imagine the manner in which the reliefs were painted as differing materially from contemporary easel and wall paintings. That is to say, from what we know of the simplicity of Greek art we can only conclude that at the period when the conventional scheme of colour of which we have record prevailed in painting it prevailed also in relief, that when invention and experience had enriched the palette, reliefs, too, became more gay and various, and that finally, when by attention to local colour, pictures had gained pictorial unity, the same system was applied to plastic works that they might more closely resemble their prototypes in Nature. This, then, was the necessary conclusion. Yet, till lately, the material which should enable us to test its truth in the light of the monuments was missing or too scantily represented. Now, however, contrary to expectation or even hope, fully painted reliefs in perfect preservation have been found. Whatever be the correct interpretation of particular details there can be no doubt that they must be assigned to the period immediately following the death of Alexander, that is, to the end of the fourth century, when Apelles, the most famous painter of antiquity, had already executed his much admired pictures for the monarch whose exploits are celebrated in these reliefs. I mean, of course, the so-called "sarcophagus of Alexander" from Sidon (Fig. 31). And now we must ask ourselves in connection with the general considerations already set forth whether the colouring of this sarcophagus corresponds to that stage of easel painting which extant sources justify us in assuming for the period of Alexander? The methods of colouring used on the "sarcophagus of Alexander" have been lately described with so fine an artistic appreciation that I cannot do better than start from this description. "Nothing in the whole work is left colourless; not that everything is actually painted over, but everything appears toned to a colour effect. *The artist was far from intending to obtain any realistic effect whatsoever by means of his colouring.* He lavishly employs full pigments in deep pure tones—yellow, purple, red in various shades, violet, blue on the drapery and armour—and lays them in the broadest possible masses over the surfaces, often with a fantastic choice. And between these powerful colours the background of the relief and all the nude flesh parts of the figures, are left in the plain marble, which in the midst of this magnificent brilliance itself appears coloured, and combines with those emphatic tones to a harmony of marvellous effect." † In presence of those works the writer was reminded of the variegated effect of Oriental carpets, and he adds to the description already quoted that a system of colour intended to reproduce reality would, if applied to these reliefs, have destroyed at one blow their pictorial charm.

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* A. Conze, *loc. cit.*, p. 574 f.

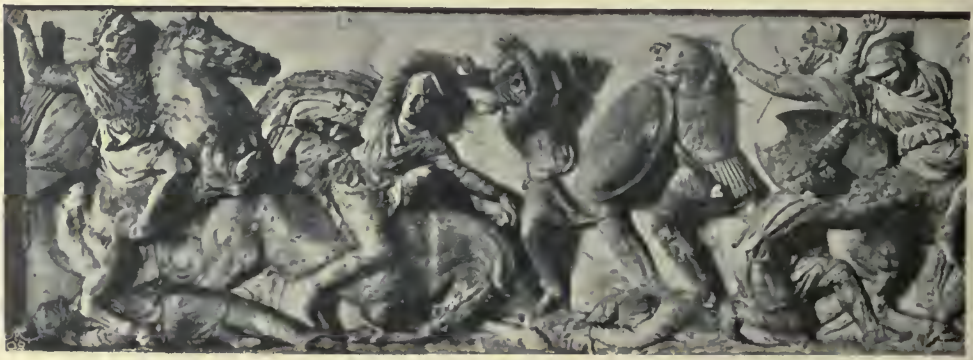

FIG. 31.—Detail from the "Sarcophagus of Alexander" (Constantinople *)

If we wish, for the sake of comparison, to find modern works of art in which painting of this kind prevails—painting, that is, which aims first of all at a fine variety of colour without any regard to local tints, reserves the flesh in the pale hue of the material and treats the background so as to give to the whole design decorative unity, though not as yet the perspective spatial unity produced by the representation of landscape or interior—we must go to the glass painting of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the same principles, glass painting loved to unite in a chorale of colours the glittering hues of the costumes, armour and accessories, with white faces and hands and an undefined background. Now, if we attribute to Apelles and his contemporaries, as indeed we must, considering the marvellous simplicity of Greek art, the same scheme of colour which we find on the "sarcophagus of Alexander," then their art must have been, from the point of view of colouring, at that stage which ignores alike the unity attained by spatial effect and the authority of local tints—that is to say, painting, as understood by the modern art-lover, had not so much as come into existence in the time of Apelles. The surprise felt at a theory implying that in two chief particulars, of which the most important is the concentration of the picture to a perfect spatial unity, the works of Apelles fall below those of Giotto and the early Sienese, who never neglected either spatial unity or local colour, arises mainly from two causes, one of which has just been hinted at. It had long been customary to compare Polygnotus with Giotto, and as a consequence Apelles had to be compared with the much later Italian masters. But those who did so forgot that ancient and modern painting developed on different lines, and that because it is one of the earliest inventions of modern art, to give unity to the picture by concentrating the space, it does not necessarily follow that this was also an early discovery in ancient painting. It might just as well have been a very late one. It is quite conceivable that as regards beauty of line and refined rhythm Apelles and his contemporaries already stood at the point which Raphael was only gradually to reach—or may even have surpassed him—while falling below Giotto in the organic treatment of the space within which their figures moved. Another cause of the difficulty felt in appreciating the older periods of Greek painting is the habit of bringing in Pompeian and Roman frescoes executed in a purely naturalistic style as illustrations of earlier stages of art, or of seeking to draw analogies between the broad landscapes of Philostratus and paintings six or seven centuries older.

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* Reproduced, by permission, from Hamdi-Bey and Th. Reinach, *Une Nécropole Royale à Sidon*, pl. xxx.

† Franz Winter in *Arch. Anzeiger*, 1894, p. 22.

If, then, we draw from the painting of the "sarcophagus of

Alexander" the natural and just conclusion with respect to the development of contemporary painting, we find ourselves completely in accord with literary and artistic tradition. In none of the notices of painting previous to Alexander is there a word about concentration in space. On the marble slabs in Naples, which can be nothing but imitations of earlier pictures,* we can see how a rounding could be effected by gradations of tone in light and shade—the *skiographia* invented as far back as Apollodorus—without the necessity of giving any more emphasis to the relation of the figures in space than is given on the red-figured vases, and how there was no need to make the contours different from those on the vases because of the gradations in tone. Foreshortenings—very difficult ones, too, on late vases—are not rare on red-figured ware, and if examples could be carefully chosen and arranged in chronological order they would illustrate the whole history of *scurzo* in the antique. We see on the vases how locality can be indicated by a few accessories, and how the painters could characterise even interiors most accurately by a few objects hung on the walls. And when we notice how, on a light ground with the inner modelling slightly marked, as on the slabs in Naples (especially the one with the Centaur), an effect of projection is attained, we need not be surprised to hear that Pausias† tried the experiment of a negative shading with light on dark in the design of a bull, or that high lights reminded people of the glitter on a glass cup.‡ If it was found necessary for the understanding of the action it was easy to draw a great rock, a temple, a tomb, a fruit tree; but this was done merely to make the story clear, not in order to define the space by a landscape background. So in the reliefs of Gjölbaschi a whole citadel with people inside and in front of it, is represented because it belongs to the action, while other figures placed immediately beside it have no connection with it in space. Hence tradition by no means forces us to assume any essential difference between vase-paintings and pictures of the same period, except in so far as the treatment was monochrome in the first and polychrome in the second. It was the inner shading only that caused the separate parts to project or recede, as is proved by the slabs in Naples, where the shading is more carefully worked out than it is on the vases.

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* Helbig, *Wandgemälde*, 170 f., 1241, 1405, 1464.

† Plin. *Nat. Hist.* xxxv. 126. [The "Centaur" has been lately published by C. Robert in the 22nd *Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm*, Halle 1899.—Ed.]

‡ Pausanias, ii. 27, 3.

That homogeneous development which I should like to point to as the special characteristic of Greek art is confirmed if we compare the class of vases with polychrome paintings with the painting on the "sarcophagus of Alexander." Slight and scattered as the traces of colour on Attic lecythi may be, they collectively illustrate the same pictorial principle as the sarcophagus from Sidon, a principle which appears already fully developed on the interior of a cylix which must be considerably older than most of the lecythi.* Here is no realistic imitation, only, as on the sarcophagus, a changeful play of bright colours on dress and furniture, while the background and the nude flesh parts are left in the white slip which covers the vases. If we imagine a vase of this kind in its original splendour we obtain a picture differing from the effect of the "sarcophagus of Alexander," only in the two particulars of material and relief, but belonging to exactly the same stage of development.† And yet the drawing on these polychrome lecythi does not differ in kind from that seen on monochrome vases, so that we can come near to the impression which Greek pictures once produced if we imagine the red-figured vase-paintings rolled out on a white ground and then shaded and variously coloured by great artists; at this point indeed, imagination can no longer help us to recover the effect, but only because of the impossibility of grasping the great personal contribution of the men of genius of whose works the potters have preserved for us feeble but, so far as they go, correct imitations. That marble sculpture in the round was painted in the same way we know from those Roman copies of ancient statues, which still retain the colour that was likewise copied from the originals. Such are the archaic Artemis in Naples or the Artemis in Vienna,‡ from the best period of Greek art; in both the flesh is left in the natural tone of the marble; in both, too, the drapery is gaily painted, but that of the earlier statue only on the borders, while that of the other is painted all over. The fact that an original statue like the Hermes of Praxiteles is finished smooth on the flesh parts and left rough on the others proves that the same use of colour was really customary on original marble works.* Of course the hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, pupils and lips were likewise tinted, as is admirably proved by the coloured marble copy of the head of the Athena Parthenos in Berlin.†

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* Cylix in Munich, "Rape of Europa," No. 208.

† As an example, see the lecythus in *Ephemeris Archaiologike*, 1887, plate IV.

‡ Published by Robert v. Schneider without colouring in *Jahrbuch der Kunstsammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* V., Taf. I. II. and p. I.

The history of Greek relief proves without any possibility of doubt that the painters of Alexander's time had not yet discovered how to concentrate a picture in space. If, however, we are to suppose that their scheme of flesh-colour was as antiquated and non-natural as that used by the artist of the sarcophagus from Sidon, we shall be surprised to find appreciative dilettanti of later antiquity, noticing and praising the freedom from any shocking archaisms in the colouring of these painters.‡ We may perhaps explain away the difficulty by concluding that those artists had made a beginning in the observance of local colour, and that consequently a style of painting with a natural scheme of colour existed for a long time, which yet lacked the effect of concentration in space.

The painted Etruscan sarcophagus in Florence, decorated with the battle of the Amazons, affords ample evidence of the manner of Greek painting during the period after Apelles (Fig. 32). There can be no question that the work is by Greek artists, or at least by a pupil of the Greeks.§ These Amazon fights differ from the style of the "sarcophagus of Alexander" in two particulars only, while following in general the same principle of beauty and variety in colouring. These two innovations are the use of natural tints for the flesh and the attempt to render the glitter of metal in the representations of armour. Here then we have, among all that gay variety of colouring, precisely those two

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* *Cf.* Specially Robert v. Schneider, *loc. cit.* p. 22.

† *Antike Denkmäler* I., Taf. III.

‡ Cicero, *Brutus*, 18, 70.

§ A. Klügmann, *Annali* 1873, p. 246, agrees with Corsen in assigning the sarcophagus to the third century; he rightly lays stress on the fact that the painting is Greek. For an excellent coloured reproduction of parts of the painting, see the facsimile by Charles Fairfax Murray, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. iv., Pl. XXXVI.–XXXVIII. [see also Amelung, *Führer durch die Antiken in Florenz*, No. 211, p. 187; good photographs by Alinari 17066–17068.]

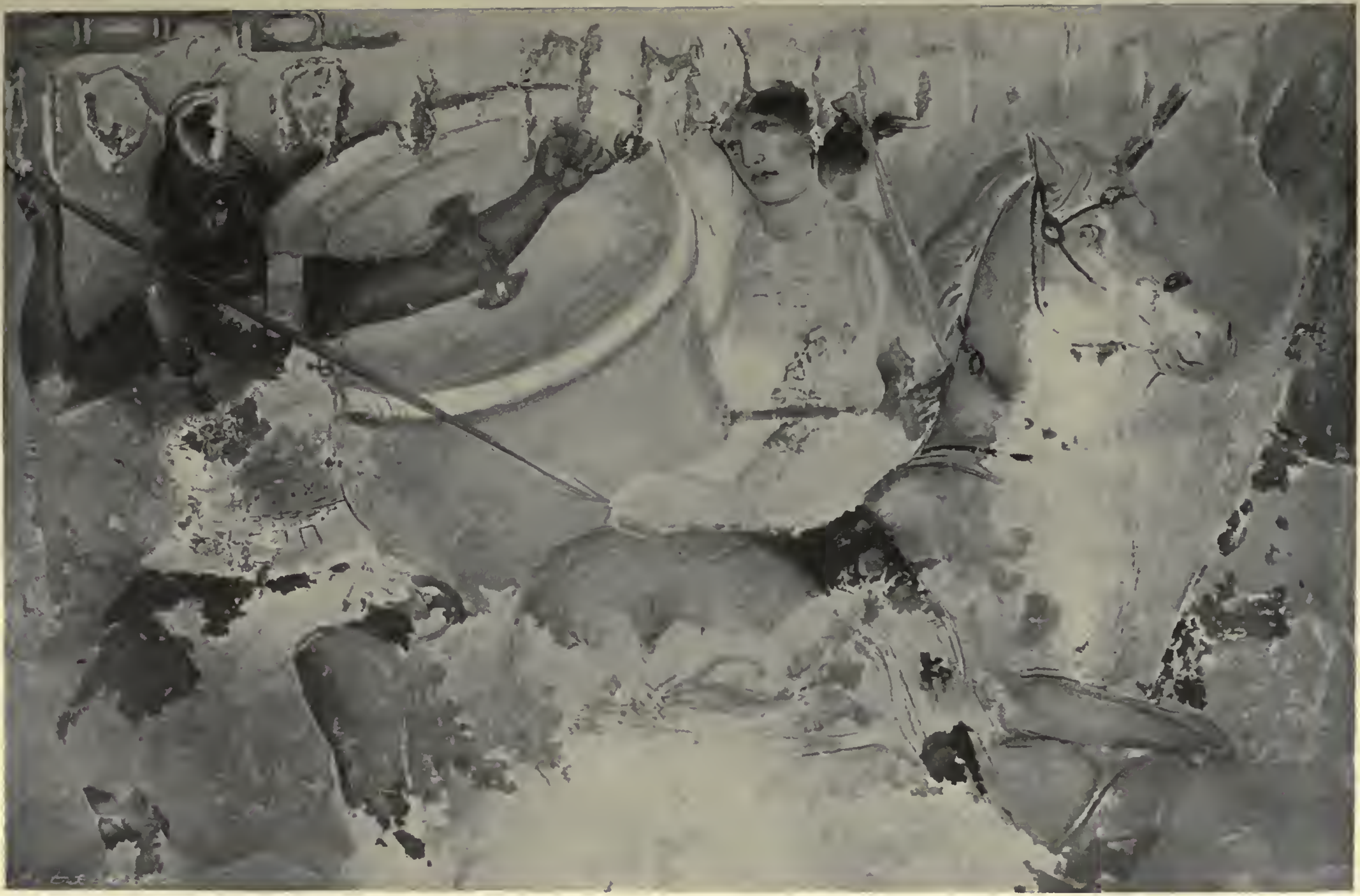

FIG. 32.—Detail from the great painted Sarcophagus in Florence (After *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1883, Plate XXXVI.)

instances of observation of Nature which were specially singled out by ancient critics in the work of Apelles as supplying the touch of naturalism in his rendering of colour.* The influence of local colour is here seen in its first stage and working over a limited range, but it has gained a footing just where its absence would have seemed most intolerable to art-lovers of a later period when local colouring was already completely developed. These two innovations notwithstanding, we moderns must still reckon Apelles and his contemporaries among the painters who aimed merely at *beauty* of colour, because the full naturalistic evolution of colour in painting, conditioned as it is by concentration in space, was as unfamiliar to them as it was to their great predecessors. The fame of Apelles rests on another merit. The course of the history of Greek painting up to his time has little to tell us about that complete annihilation of the flat surface, which is the final aim of all painting (we must remember that with regard to effects of depth also, painting and relief had kept pace together); it is much more the history of the compromises effected between the memory image (*Erinnerungsbild*),† with its ever-growing consciousness of the third dimension and a traditional system of representation, which by its colouring of the surface had long striven to exclude the third dimension altogether. Apelles it was who made the breach in tradition, or at least widened it so effectually that succeeding ages justly honoured him as the "Father of Painting," and as a great reformer of art, since relief also had soon to accommodate itself to the new laws established in painting.

The fortunate preservation of the "sarcophagus of Alexander" affords us also a glimpse, if only a passing glimpse, into the determining principle of that system of Greek painting which chose colours for their beauty alone. To return to the description already cited: "The scheme of colour is as fantastic in the ornamentation as it is in the figures. Round the frieze, under the lid, ran yellow vine branches on a purple ground. This combination could only have occurred to a painter with a very delicate sense of colour."‡ The principle governing the choice of colour naturally comes out more clearly in ornamentation than in figure subjects, where choice, however free, cannot be altogether arbitrary. On this frieze accordingly, we may observe that the principle of colour selection was physiological. Light yellow and violet are complementary colours, the one arising from the other in the course of the painter's work, without co-operation on his part and simply by physiological law. The process is as follows: When the artist has gone on painting leaf after leaf light yellow, after a time, if he looks away from his work, he sees violet patches of colour close to one another on the background of vision; he sees these violet patches in front of him wherever he turns his eyes, and as soon as he has completed his yellow branch the complementary violet actually floats before his eyes. Accordingly, if only the necessary pigments be at hand, he will mix this colour to continue his work with. This example is not isolated, but illustrates a traditional practice of long standing. The borders of the drapery of all the archaic female statues found on the Acropolis were likewise painted in accordance with the law of complementary colours, purple and green,* so that we see the law of the physiological choice of colour being obeyed for centuries. The spectator who naturally lives under the same physiological conditions as the artist, received from works of art where this law was observed an impression of pleasure and repose, somewhat similar to that produced by simple mathematical relations in architecture, without being yet exactly conscious of the reason thereof. But the isolated cases in which this law was broken or evaded by a certain conventional colouring that could not be excluded (the white employed for the faces for example) by the limitations of the palette and other hindrances, or, on the other hand, the numerous means that were discovered and adopted to reinforce it—all these lie outside the reach of our observation. It is sufficient to have detected the same principle of colouring in sculptures in the round, reliefs and pictures so long as pictures had not attained to spatial unity by the elaboration of the background and the influence of local colouring had not completely asserted itself.† Thus the parallel and equal development of painting and painted sculpture, already conjectured by Conze, has been demonstrated by the new discovery, though in a different manner to what might have been expected.

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* Cicero, *de Natura deorurum* I. 27, 73; Herondas (ed. O. Crusius), IV. 59–65.

† [See the note on p. 52.—Ed.]

‡ Franz Winter, *loc. cit.* p. 22.

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* *Ephemeris* 1887, Plate IX.; *Antike Denkmäler*, I. 19, 39.

† Parallel with the colour scheme mentioned above which left the flesh white, another was in use, which (in the case of male figures at least) painted the flesh reddish brown. C. T. Newton (*Discoveries at Halicarnassus*, I. p. 238) states that the frieze of the Mausoleum,

If we look further back still we find this homogeneous development in a yet earlier period. Art had begun by using colour merely as a conventional distinction of parts, and the black-figured *pinakes*, the vases, the male head from the Acropolis with green pupils and blue beard [*] prove the simultaneous adoption of *a conventional distribution of colour* both in painting and sculpture.[†] We watched the same parallel development in the succeeding period *when colours are selected for their variety and beauty according to physiological law.* We have now to inquire whether at the time that local colouring predominated in painting it was also observed in the colouring of sculpture—whether, in other words, that homogeneous development held good also in this third stage of the art.

We have in the Campanian and Roman frescoes such rich material to prove the complete development of painting with observation of local colour that we do not need to begin by proving the existence of the method. And, as a matter of course, all the pictures in which objects are represented in their natural colours are concentrated in space, corresponding in this respect again exactly to modern painting. Indeed, we might almost say without further argument that this concentration in space is the determining cause which transforms an arbitrary arrangement of beautiful colours into an imitation of Nature by the employment of local colour. As soon as the evolution of the

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when it was uncovered, was found to be painted reddish brown on the nude parts of the figures and blue on the ground; a fragment of an Attic votive relief shows the same flesh-tint (Friederichs-Wolters, No. 117). As an example of the same colouring in paintings I may cite the "warrior charging," with brown flesh and white armour on a Pinax or slab with white ground, from the Acropolis, *Ephemeris*, 1887, pin. VI. In connection with this varying treatment of flesh we are reminded of the distinction between Greek and Asiatic painting as stated in literary sources. Perhaps the distinction subsisted simply between traditional schemes of colour. It is not strange that after the styles had once crystallised, examples of both should occur in a city like Athens.

[*] *Antike Denkmäler*, I. 30.

[†] Arising from the peculiar conditions of the technique, a conventional colour-scheme survived on painted terra-cotta vessels (with the exception of a few kinds of ware) to late Hellenistic times.

to a few colours, but one of these systems or the other will always predominate and give its character to the picture. Again, the treatment in "plein-air," or by the method of chiaroscuro, is quite independent either of the conventional rendering of form or of naturalistic imitation. Stylists, naturalists and illusionists take part in both. A beautiful play of line may be filled in with heavy rust colour, as by Raphael in his later years; like Caravaggio, the artist may conjure up out of black night terrible forms of indubitable actuality, or like Rembrandt he may marshal fantastic fairy figures through the gloom. Fra Angelico makes his saints and angels descend to earth in a glory of light; Piero della Francesca lets light and air play about his severely drawn figures, which appear as if hewn out of stone; and Velasquez, endowed with the might of a god, paints with light and air in imitation of Nature as though he had to create her anew. Ethnic and climatic conditions in their complicated alternation, with the modifying influence they have always exercised upon the development of modern art alternately favoured the predominance in painting now of light and now of shadow. It was different in Greece. There the painter had

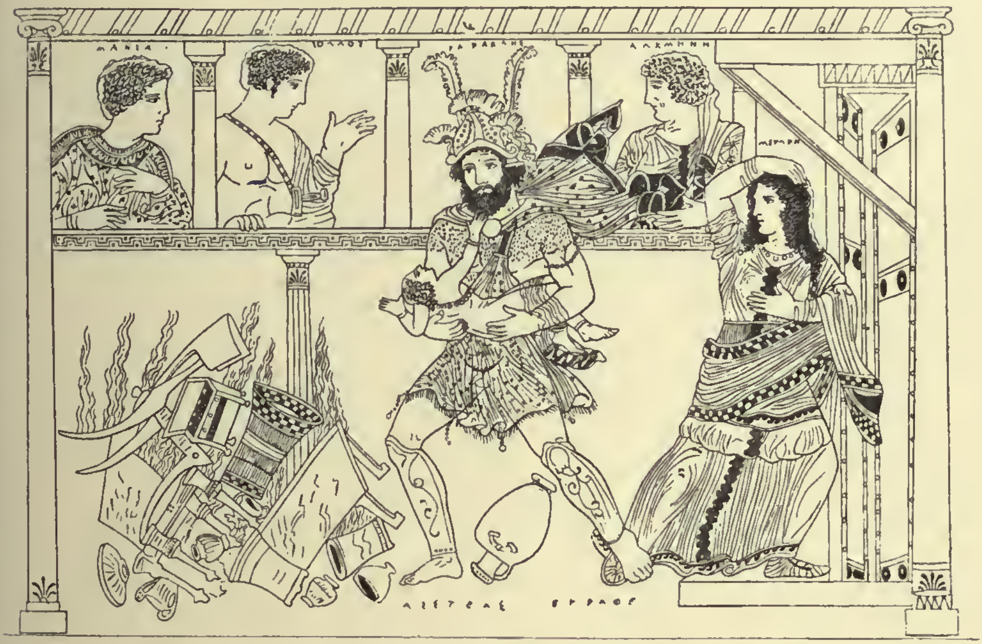

FIG. 34.—Vase signed by Assteas (Madrid)

no choice. He saw how the light about him partly fused and partly absorbed the local colours, and he was forced to represent in his pictures what he actually saw, as soon as Greek art had reached to that stage in its organic development where a consistent naturalism was no longer to be avoided. So long as it was possible, Greek art had rejected all naturalistic combinations, and, even now, it tried to evade or to weaken naturalism first by flaccid baroque in the second century and again by the bald, dry manner that recalls the "Empire" style. In painting, the "plein-air" method was a necessary development. Accordingly we find it consistently carried out in the Campanian pictures, where it not infrequently even degenerates, as occurs in modern art, into an insipid, chalky, bluish pink iridescence. It may here be noted in passing that, owing to this fundamental difference between later and older Greek painting, it is impossible that the originals of the Campanian wall-paintings should be earlier than the third century. At the most do a few traditional schemes of movement occur, which may point back to an earlier art.

In the period marked by the prevalence of local colour in painting, with its preference for light rather than deep tones of colour, how was painting applied to marble statutes or reliefs? The busts put together out of variously coloured marble, like that female portrait* in the Capitol, or the Antinous Mondragone made of flesh-coloured marble in the Louvre,† might be taken as evidence for the naturalistic painting of the busts at the close of the development in the period of Hadrian, that is to say, they might confirm what we have already gathered from the technique of busts belonging to the perfected period of illusionist sculpture; but that might just as well be the final result of a course of development, as evidence of the continuous and uninterrupted evolution of an art practice taken over from the Hellenistic period. Now as we do not possess any works in marble painted on a complete system of local colour—and this is by no means surprising, since till the discovery of the "sarcophagus of Alexander" we had no good instructive example of the preceding decorative system—we must supplement our information by considering works in other materials. In this respect coloured terra-cottas are instructive. The countless figurines found in Tanagra and elsewhere, with their rosy faces and bright dresses in delicately shaded tints, form a miniature series corresponding to coloured sculpture and running parallel to the evolution of painting from the third to the first century.* For the second century we have as additional evidence the life-size recumbent female figures on Etruscan sarcophagi, with their natural tints for the flesh parts and their rich draperies in bright light colours.† We are forced to accept them as evidence in spite of the great advance made by Etruscan art in the matter of naturalism, because discrepancy in such an important point would be impossible. The real significance of the painted terra-cotta figures as part of a chain of proof is first made plain by the addition of another indirect proof for the colouring of marble statues in natural tints. This is afforded by the imitations of such statues on Pompeian wall-paintings. First there is the statue of Artemis as fountain figure on a wall of the *Casà di Apolline ;* the flesh is in bright carnations, the chiton and hunting boots are yellow.‡ It is significant of the prejudice that reigned till lately in favour of uncoloured sculpture, that Helbig, who perfectly recognised that the figure was meant for a statue, yet took no notice of the bright colour and described it as executed in the tints of marble.§ A statue of Apollo is in the same way painted as a fountain figure on the wall beside the fountain in the garden of the *Casa dell' Orso ;* it, too, exhibits the same fresh local colouring of the flesh.|| A whole series of similar examples came to light not long ago in the *Casa del Centenario.* There a garden is represented with ornamental water-works; square basins from which rise jets of water that foam over the edge, stand in a row in front of a hedge. Each basin is carried by a crouching winged figure painted naturalistically. We see, then, that even figures used merely as supports had a natural colouring. In the same category we may place the figures of girls holding a shell in front of them, painted on the walls of gardens.* Remains of a naturalistic colouring were also detected on the familiar group of Cheiron and Achilles in the garden of the *Casa dell' Adonide ferito.*† These unimpeachable witnesses to the polychromy of ancient sculpture are fading from day to day and will soon have disappeared. Natural-tinted statues which serve some architectonic purpose in the interior of apartments, such as the Atlantes in a back room of the *Casa del Laberinto*, the female Caryatid-hermæ with rich drapery [Reg. VII. Ins. I. 40], the herm of a Silenus [Reg. IX. Ins. VI., via secunda, second door, unnumbered], form a transition to those small coloured figures conceived of as alive which play about among the architecture, an invention which can only be understood as the outcome of sculpture painted in natural colours. The statues painted on walls confirm the evidence afforded by a statuette of Venus found in Pompei.‡ The yellow drapery of the figure corresponds in tint to the dress of the Artemis in the *Casa dell' Orso*, while the traces of red colour still to be seen in the navel and nostrils leave no room for doubt that the nude parts of the statuette, inclusive of the face, were entirely covered by a coating of colour.§ A marble head in the British

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* *Cf.* above, p. 61.

† *Cf.* L. Dietrichson, *Antinoos*, Christiania 1884, p. 230, and Ottfried Müller, *Handbuch der Archäologie*, 203, 3. [Brunn-Bruckmann *Denkmäler*, No. 70.]

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* The first enthusiasm about these figures caused them, as a matter of course, to be dated back to the fourth century, an expression which in the archæological dialect had become a synonym for everything good, beautiful, and charming; but R. Kekulé noticed in his very first publication of these figurines that most of them belonged either to the third century B.C. or to a later date. (R. Kekulé, *Griechische Thonfiguren aus Tanagra.* Stuttgart, 1878, p. 24.)

† The sarcophagus with a recumbent female figure from Chiusi in the Etruscan Museum at Florence is reproduced from a water-colour drawing by Ernst Eichler in *Antike Denkmäler,* I. [*cf.* also Amelung, *Führer durch die Antiken in Florenz*, No. 212.]

‡ Helbig, *Wandgemälde*, 240. § Helbig, *ibid.* || Not given by Helbig.

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* Examples in good preservation in the front garden of the Stabian Thermæ. Helbig, who cites these painted statues under Nos. 1057–1062, has overlooked in this case also the natural colours on the flesh parts.

† Woermann, *Kunst und Naturskizzen*, I. p. 225 f. *cf.* also p. 234. The conclusion drawn by Woermann from the natural colour of these statues, that they were imitated from terra-cotta figures, has also been refuted by Treu.

‡ Published by Dilthey, *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1881, Taf. 7, and reproduced by Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, III., Taf. XLVII.

§ Correctly observed by Dilthey (*loc. cit.* p. 134), who refers to another statuette of Venus in the Naples Museum (No. 7) on the neck of which are to be seen traces of a warm flesh tint (*loc. cit.* p. 135, note 13). If I am not mistaken, the traces of colour on the statuette discussed above are due to vermilion, but I form my opinion merely from the eye, not as the result of chemical analysis, and I am well aware how easy it is to confuse vermilion and rust. Among the pigments known and commonly used at that time vermilion is the one that produces the best flesh-colour on marble, and the addition of ochre or of black makes it possible to reproduce all shades of carnation. Vitruvius refers to vermilion in a well-

Museum,* rather later in date, still preserves its complete colouring, which corresponds exactly with that of the painted statue in Pompei.

We must now return to our point of departure, the relief on the arch of Titus. The relief with the bearers of the sacred vessels must, as we saw, have been completed by colour in the same manner that we were led to assume for decorative reliefs, such as the wreath in the SS. Apostoli, and for contemporary busts. That this colouring could only be carried out by exact observance of local tints was clearly evident from the fact that the development of painting was parallel to that of painted sculpture, and that the latter had arrived at natural colouring more than three hundred years before. But since that first introduction of local colouring the great revolution had taken place in sculpture from naturalism to illusionism, or, in more general terms, the Oriental Hellenic style had given way before the Occidental-Latin. Had, then, the same revolution taken place in painting also, and were the statues of the illusionist period differently coloured from those of the naturalistic? Fortunately the extant wall-paintings in Rome and in Campania are enough to prove that as early as the first century A.D. the illusionist treatment of painting had broken ground at least in the West, and that therefore the homogeneous development of sculpture and painting in ancient art went on in this period also.

As an event of such importance in the history of painting would demand a connected and exhaustive treatment which must be postponed

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known passage (VII. 9). He warns the painter not to use vermilion like other pigments in wall painting but—because it would soon lose its colour when exposed to the air—a wall-surface painted with vermilion must be carefully waxed "as nude statues are," *uti signa nuda curantur*. At a time when it was thought that ancient statues were not coloured, this passage of Vitruvius was interpreted as referring to a coating of wax spread over the unpainted marble of statues. But what Vitruvius really means to say is that the vermilion pigment on the wall-surface must be protected by wax in the same way as the colouring of the flesh parts of statues, which was universally practised in his day. And this would no doubt be prepared with wax for the same reason as the walls, because it consisted of vermilion. Vermilion was certainly employed for the Capitoline Jupiter (*cf.* K. Blümner, *Technologie*, III. p. 201), and hence a coating of wax would be necessary.

* Georg Treu. *Archäologisches Jahrbuch*, IV. p. 18, Taf. I. Treu's suggestion that this is an imitation of a Greek fourth century original is a pure conjecture. It is a superficially executed ideal head of later Imperial times such as repeatedly occurs in statues meant for gardens and theatres. Hence we cannot reason from the painting of this head to the painting of statues in the fourth century.

for the present, the reader need only be reminded that we must beware of arguing hastily from the analogy of modern and quite recent illusionist painting back to the antique. Because the best known and most important of the modern illusionists had to work his way to the atmosphere of light in which his pictures are bathed by first conquering the classicising asphaltists and the tenebrosi, who themselves were already illusionists, and because the more recent impressionists work almost only in sunshine it might easily appear as if *painting in light* was an integral element of illusionism, and that illusionism, be it in colour, be it in some other respect, was the necessary result of this method of painting. But this is by no means the case. During the evolution of modern painting we see *painting in light* and *naturalism* more frequently combined than *painting in light* and *illusionism*, and in ancient art we came to look upon this painting in light as the faithful attendant upon naturalism. Since, then, the illusionist painters of antiquity who allowed for the effect of light were like its naturalist painters, it follows that in antiquity there was no distinction of colouring between naturalism and illusionism.

Now in the painting of sculpture the rendering of colour is the only vital point. The chief distinction between the two schools of painting proper consists in the different means by which his sense of the plane surface is overcome in the spectator, and the depth of the picture is obtained; but this distinction scarcely comes into question in the painting of sculpture, or plays only so unobtrusive and insignificant a part that we should find it difficult to detect its workings among the fragmentary materials we possess. It was the actual plastic treatment of sculpture, with reference to momentary movement, to light and shade, that was intended to bring into play the illusionist effects, even when the local colour was quite simply treated. The delicate, well-balanced tones of the Campanian pictures, the blonde harmonies of which are heightened here and there by light keen notes, justifies us in assuming that the fine taste and cultivated colour-sense of the time would find expression in the colouring of sculpture also. The treatment need have been neither tormented nor in any way complicated in the process.

We can, it is true, only conjecture how the paintings on the reliefs of the arch of Titus were carried out as to details. Conjecture, however, is pardonable when it is a question of obtaining some clear notion of the original appearance of such a marvel of art as that procession on the arch of Titus. Just as the artist of the "sarcophagus of Alexander" left the marble unpainted for the nude parts and background, in the intervals between the bright colours, so that the spectator, even if dazzled by the brilliant variety of hue, never lost the feeling of a marble work, so, too, the artist who finished in colour the reliefs on the arch of Titus could, if he chose, make effective and intelligible, simply by observing local colour, the conditions of style demanded by the original material of a work which was made of white marble. All that was necessary was to let the prevailing hue of the Roman dress, which was white, be represented by the plain marble. Imagine the men in the front row dressed in white, and the bearers of the sacred vessels in neutral, slightly earthy tints, or in the pale shaded rose and lilac that Pompeian painting loves, then at once the fact that the second row is overtaking the front row who are holding back, gains in clearness, the feeling of movement is intensified, and if, in addition, we suppose that the little which is visible of the dress of the standard-bearers who accompany the procession on its other side, showed through in white or flat tones, the effect of depth in the background becomes complete. The gold of the swinging vessels set off against the blue of the sky was intended to crown the scheme of colour. Whatever the exact details, it was certainly by colour that this rare work of art attained to its full effect, which, by keeping the pendulum of emotion swinging between complete illusion on the one hand and on the other surprise that all the living pageant should be but marble after all, generated in the brain of the sensitive spectator those waves of pleasure which are really the hidden aim of all illusionist art, and which lift its masterpieces, be they Roman reliefs or Spanish pictures, far above all possibility of producing the æsthetic discomfort so often inseparable from an uncompromising imitation of Nature.

For the first time, perhaps, since man took up a chisel to fashion an image out of stone, had a sculptor in this relief of the arch of Titus held up a mirror to the world. Now, however, in the relief opposite, his task was to solve by illusionist means a problem that was quite otherwise conditioned. The Emperor was to appear on his triumphal chariot with his retinue about him, crowned by the goddess of Victory and attended by allegorical figures of Rome and the People. Thus, a scene that takes place in the realm of fancy, or rather a real scene about which fancy plays, had to be cut out of stone and made to simulate reality by means of those devices which had been invented for imitating Nature with the effect of truth. Such a subject would have been easy to master in an art expressing itself by type, where the same conventions combined into one harmonious presentment the human event and the supernatural powers. Egypt and the East had in their earliest pictures shown their rulers and kings surrounded by gods and demons. In the time of Alexander the motive was revived, and Apelles gave to his king the same supernatural retinue. Scenes like this, frequently repeated at the court of the Diadochi, were handed on to the Rome of Augustus with the other themes of Hellenistic art. On the Vienna Cameo Augustus crowned is enthroned by the side of Roma, with allegorical figures around him, while Victory leads forward Tiberius. On the Paris Cameo we see the deified Emperor borne up to heaven.

Finally, the scene was introduced into the sober style of the Augustan period, which continued to use it as a detail that did not further disturb its naturalistic principles. On the Vienna Cameo the Roman soldiers building a trophy express their eagerness, and the barbarian captives their grief, by balanced gestures which throw them into graceful groups. These compositions, handed over from an earlier period, had absorbed none of the naturalism of the Augustan school; they only reproduced its stilted affectation. But now, in the arch of Titus, illusionism was confronted with the task of illustrating the same theme in figures of more than life-size. It was one of the last works which was to mark the complete reception of Greek art by the West and which at that same time sealed its conquest by the art of Rome.

Stylists, naturalists, and illusionists, Pheidias, Verrocchio, and Bernini, Raphael, Jan van Eyck, and Rembrandt have all found out the way that leads to the presence of the Divine. The kind of art is immaterial; it is the power of the artist that determines whether his flight can carry him up to the empyrean of phantasy. It was not in poetic twilight, but in the broad, clear light of the South, on the arch of Titus, that the earliest of the great illusionists whose work is preserved to us was called upon to weave together forms sprung of poesy with the actual life of his own day. It was upon the artist who in the procession with the temple utensils has given us a standard for the illusionist style unrivalled up to this day, that this absolutely impossible task was laid. Let us consider first how he sought to realise the scene * (Fig. 30). As regards the rendering of depth he has even surpassed himself. He has worked the heads and *fasces* of the lictors flat on the background, and by means of the high relief of the front figures produces the illusion of a free space intervening between the chariot with its retinue in front and the lictors behind. He makes the chariot drive obliquely out from the right hand corner to the front, and fills the corner up to the extreme edge with figures whose grouping helps to make the oblique direction of the chariot fully intelligible. Just as excellent as this side of the design is the other, where Roma is represented with her companion turning, as they advance, so as to face the Emperor, and introducing the movement of the procession. Admirable as these portions are in invention and execution, we are almost startled by the Quadriga pacing along in the middle. For even admitting that the horses have already made a turn to the right, to be shortly followed by the chariot, yet the attempt to express perspective by placing them slantwise one before another, is not happy from any point of view. The spectator, as soon as he stands at the entrance of the arch so that the procession comes towards him, receives at once an unpleasant impression from the foreshortening. But if he advances further to the centre of the arch, the arbitrariness of the arrangement becomes intolerable and destroys all illusion. Perhaps the modern spectator, accustomed as he is to pictures in correct perspective, is more conscious of the defect than ancient critics would have been, since it is easy in looking at a conventionalised composition to think away the knowledge and skill of our own times, while in a work calculated for illusion we are apt, on the contrary, to resent the disregard of the simplest laws of optics. Ancient critics, however, must have noted the deficiency, for the mistake is avoided in later reliefs, and the artists of Trajan's time choose simpler problems where this kind of failure is excluded. This brings to light a fundamental difference between ancient and modern art. In the fifteenth century modern art was put through a scientific training the effects of which still endure. The principles then discovered still influence the modern spectator, though he may not be conscious of their existence until some gross violation of them shocks his accustomed sense. An ancient artist was, of course, quite able to design a memory-image* in perspective without any knowledge of the science of perspective. Nay, linear perspective, consistently carried out in relief, would in many instances, as even experts † in the science must admit, frequently destroy the illusion, mainly for the reason, which all the rules have overlooked, that the cast shadows, the distribution of which partly helps and partly conditions illusion, cannot be taken into account. In the relief representing the procession with the sacred vessels, the artist was quite right to place figures worked out almost in the round in front of figures in shallower relief, and to work heads on the flat looking out between, so that from each point of view the correct foreshadowing resulted of itself. In the relief with the Triumph it was a mistake to complicate the perspective problem so much by foreshortening the front view of the Quadriga, for a perspective memory-image (*Erinnerungsbild*) will remain approximately right only if the conceptions are very simple. However, were the work still coloured and in thorough preservation the gay brilliancy would distract attention from many a defect. The legs of the horses, with their changing shadows and reflexions, the purple and gold harness against the white of their bodies (for we may obviously suppose that the Quadriga as centre-piece was left to represent the original material) the rosy carnations of the *Roma*, and the more vigorous tints of the nude figure of *Populus*, the gay dresses and gilded ornaments, the Emperor with his jewels and the flashing wings of the Victory, all this must have resulted in an effect of festal magnificence which would blind the spectator to the indubitable faults.

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* Philippi, *loc. cit.*, Plate II.

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* [*I.e.*, *Erinnerungsbild* or "visual image," see note on p. 52.]

† Ernst Brücke, *Bruchstücke aus der Theorie der bildenden Künste*, Leipzig, 1877, ch. III, "Die Reliefperspective," p. 83.

It is only by the comparative ill-success of the attempt to carry through the illusion in the realistic part of his work that our artist betrays his position at the beginning of the movement, and shows himself not completely master of the illusionist methods. In the other part of his task, that of fitting fantastic creations into real life, he has been successful. The superb female figure and the youth in the flower of his age seem exultant impersonations of festal joy as they frame the team of horses, and form, so to speak, pivots of movement beside the gala chariot. By their attitude and position they point to the Emperor as the spiritual centre of the composition, an idea further emphasised by the movement of the Victory. All this together completes the impression of the surging past of a triumphal procession, and favours the illusive similitude of life which without their help would lose much of its interest and intensity. Let us add that the artist had not invented these figures. He had taken Greek types, and assimilated them to more familiar forms by stripping them of their statuesque repose. Thus bare copying of Greek statues was also abandoned here, and statues might now be specially modified to suit the purposes of illusionist art.

Just as continuous movement formed the artistic motive in the arch of Titus, so a generation later an illusionist design of the same nature reappears on the arch of Trajan at Beneventum,* in the separate reliefs of the front and back of the structure and of the inner archway (Figs. 35–40). The artist wished to make the spectator feel as if he were standing opposite one of those crowds that collect at public

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* Inadequate illustrations of the figures in Rossini, *Gli Archi Trionfali*, tav. 38 sq.; better reproductions in Almerico Meomartini, *I monumenti a le opere d'arte della città di Benevento*, 1889; *cf.* also E. Petersen, "L'arco di Trajano a Benevento," in *Römische Mittheilungen*, 1892. [Excellent photographs by Alinari, Nos. 11494–11501.]

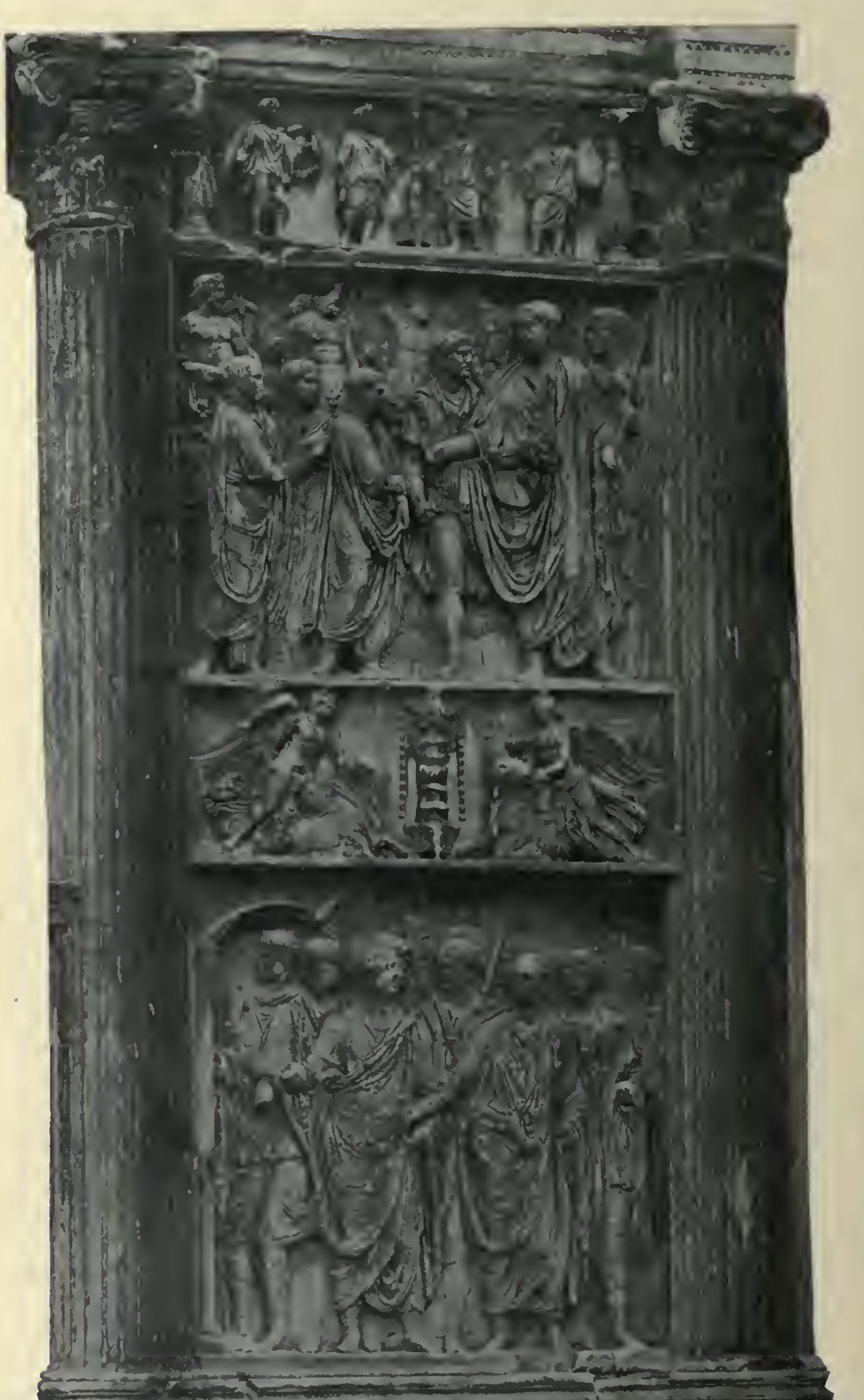

FIG. 35.—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum; Reliefs on R. Pier facing City (Photograph Alinari)

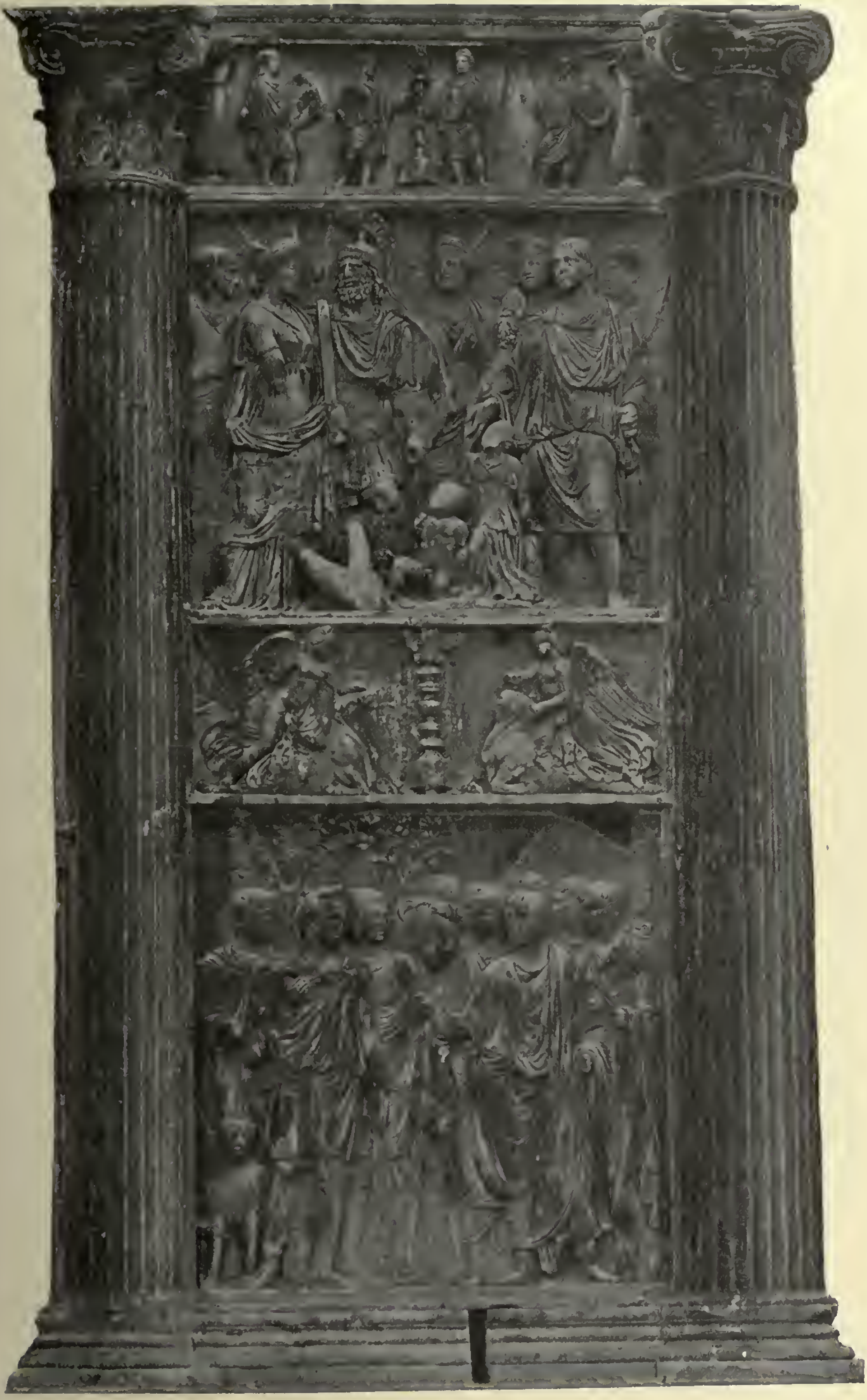

FIG. 36.—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum; Reliefs on R. Pier facing Country (Photograph Alinari)

festivals on religious or political occasions, and squeeze, push and elbow each other till they even encroach on the space reserved for the official personages, who are obliged to stand closely packed while the introductions, salutations, and sacrificial ceremonies are going on. Illusion, then, is here called upon to represent the notion of *crowding*, the strongest possible contrast to the balanced group, which even in the works of a mature realism, such as the Menelaus with the body of Patroclus,* Hellenic genius could only render by a linear scheme of the utmost grace and finish. Here in Italy we are confronted with an art distinct from the Greek, not so much in the scope of its subjects, as in the innermost essence of its being. How fine the skill and how simple the means with which an impression of crowding is produced in this narrow frame! The Emperor and those immediately concerned in the action are brought forward to the outer edge, and behind them figure after figure, head after head is inserted, till the heads at the very back are either cut in flat profile on the blue sky and cast no shadows—the old method of the *Ara Pacis* which makes the background recede indefinitely—or are formed more in the round so as to throw their shadows on the buildings behind. When a surging crowd of sightseers and officials is represented, the whole interest must be concentrated on one person or on some few persons on whose account the curious mob has gathered, and priests, officials and soldiers have assembled. All heads are eagerly turned in one direction, and the real centre of the design is no longer artistic but moral. It is the Emperor who is the cynosure of all eyes, whether of the spectators cut in stone in the relief above, or of those standing below in flesh and blood facing the arch. The structure may contain, as here in Beneventum, twenty-six frames, through each of which we seem to see a mass of human life, still we look again and again for the Emperor; for every one wants to know what he is doing and what face he has put on for the spectacle, and only where the personages engaged in the particular function are too numerous are they left to overflow into the neighbouring compartment which is then wholly given up to them. In a brilliant essay which completes the excellent observations previously made by Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, the well-known professor in Heidelberg, has shown that every single one of the figures which compose the throng has an allegorical and political

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* [Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 240.—Ed.]

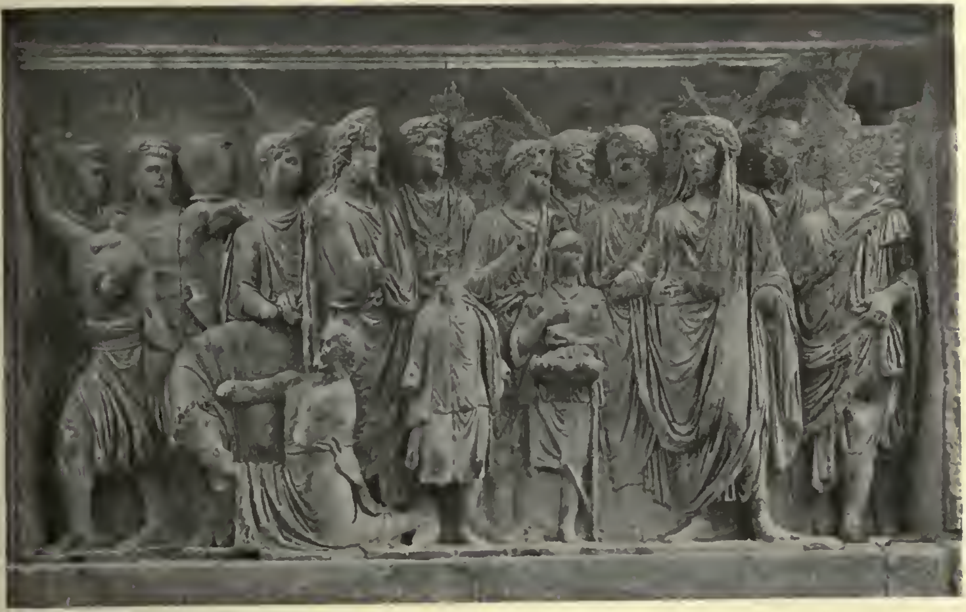

FIG. 37.—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum ; Relief of the Inner Archway (Photograph Alinari)

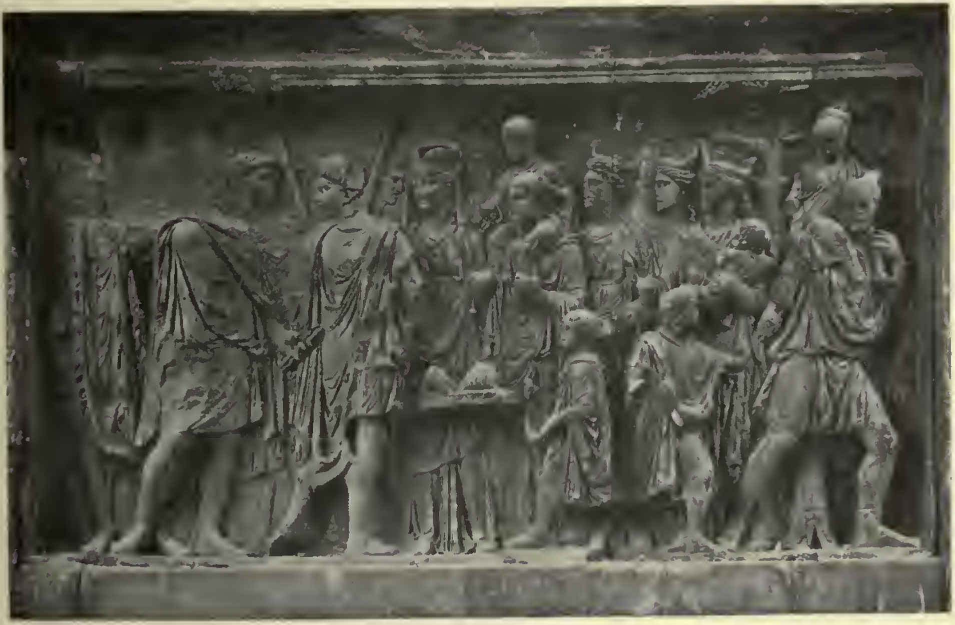

FIG. 38.—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum ; Relief of the Inner Archway (Photograph Alinari)

meaning.* If we follow this inquiry closely we undergo the same psychological experience as a spectator at a public state function. In front of each compressed group our first impulse is to discover the Emperor; then we turn our attention to the principal personages, and try to make them out ourselves or inquire who they are from some one standing by, till at last the partakers in the festivity and its meaning will all become clear to us. Roman artists could count on a greater degree of credulity in their public than would be found in ours. So they surrounded the Emperor with allegorical figures full of suggestiveness, and with demoniac beings who grace the ceremonies with their presence, but they arranged these allegorical beings in close compact masses, precisely as mortals would appear on a similar occasion, thus helping to explain what is going on, without endangering the illusionist quality of the work. Even the gods of the land who surround the Emperor, appear in close array like the rest.

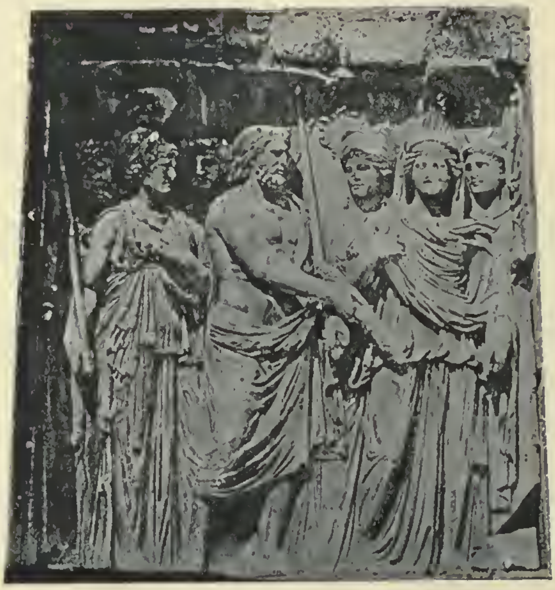

FIG. 39—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum; Frieze of the *Attica* (After Meomartini)

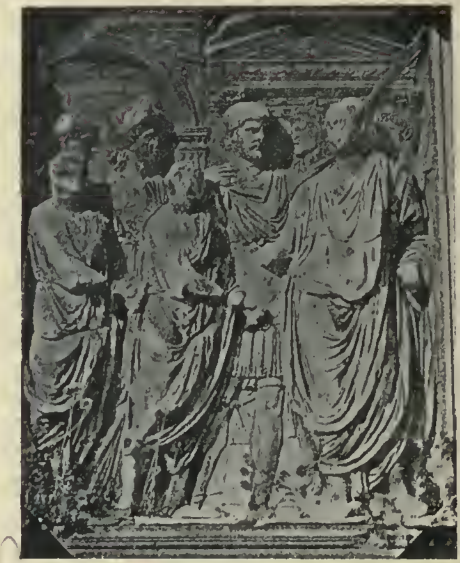

FIG. 40.—Arch of Trajan at Beneventum; Frieze of the *Attica* (After Meomartini)

The moment had now arrived

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* A. von Domaszewski: "Die politische Bedeutung des Traiansbogens in Benevent," in *Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Instituts in Wien*, ii. 1899, p. 173ff.

when the *continuous* narrative style was to take its definite shape. Why endlessly repeat in isolated pictures the crowd among whom the Emperor was to appear? Was it not possible to find a more monumental mode of expression by letting, for instance, the crowd of horses and men and behind them the landscape background, be continued uninterruptedly, and making the Emperor appear here and there at intervals, forming the nucleus of action wherever he comes into view, and thus marking halts of special interest in the continuous band of unbroken movement. Was not the imagination, after having already brought gods and demons into the illusionist style, to be allowed to bring together all the separate events such as a modern reader would get from his perishable "weekly," and perpetuate them in a form easy to survey on monuments destined to last for thousands of years? As the *complementary* style answered to epic poetry, and the *isolating* style to drama, so the *continuous* style, as it appears on Trajan's column, answers to historic prose. In these reliefs the Emperor's campaigns follow one another without rest or pause. Let us look at some of the scenes. At the beginning of the new year of the war (102?) the Emperor leaves his winter quarters and goes down to the harbour to take ship, and a little further on we find him seated in the Imperial galley, where, taking as usual his share of the toils of war, he is himself holding the helm (see Fig. 41). Then we see him arrived at the end of his journey, disembark, and—in immediate continuity—ride at the head of his troops. The fighting begins,

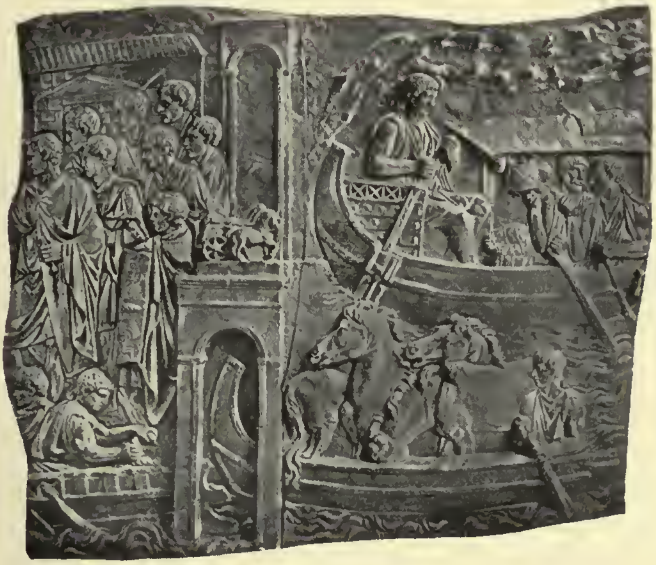

FIG. 41.—Relief from Column of Trajan (after Fröhner)

the Dacians are repulsed, and at nightfall a tribe comes before the Emperor to offer submission. During the renewal of the battle the Emperor questions a barbarian prisoner; when the victory is won he thanks his soldiers and appears once more distributing with his own hands the prizes to the bravest. Again he is seen issuing from a citadel, marching at the head of his legions over a bridge of boats, climbing the mountains and arriving with his army before a fortified town. A second time he receives Dacians, who offer him submission, he performs a solemn sacrifice and personally exhorts the troops to battle. Then the artist makes him ride through a brook, receive an embassy, lead the army once more to battle, and returning to the camp after victory, hold colloquy with the enemy's princelings, superintend the pitching of a new camp, lead the onslaught afresh, examine the fortifications attended by his general staff, accept the submission of his enemies and at the end of this campaign thank his soldiers.*

Twenty-three times does the Emperor appear in the representation of this one campaign, and if we follow the twenty-three windings of the column's spiral, we find that he comes in more than ninety times, so that on some windings he occurs more than four times. This repetition is far from wearisome. If we wind round and round the pillar, or, as we men of books are content to do, turn over Fröhner's plates, and have once grasped how Trajan is present everywhere, decides everything, orders everything, and sees his orders carried out takes every kind of toil upon himself, and then in the triumph of victory becomes the centre of all homage—nay, so soon as we even begin to grasp this, all accessory interest shrinks before the interest in *him* everywhere; wherever war is going on we want to know what he is doing, and in every fresh event we are dissatisfied till we have found out his striking person. The method of constant repetition, though to the reflective faculty it may seem to break up artistic unity, excites the imagination of the spectator who, after following his hero through so many dangers and finally seeing him gain the great end of his labours, the subjugation of Dacia, carries back the impression that he has really been through the campaign at the Emperor's side.

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* Fröhner, *La Colonne Trajane* (Paris, 1872), p. 77 ff. The plates on which the figure of the Emperor occurs in the circumstances given above are: Pl. 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77 twice, 80, 82, 86, 90, 93, 97, 100, 102, 106. [Since the *Wiener Genesis* was published, the first part of Dr. Conrad Cichorius's great work on the column has appeared (1896); the fifty-seven plates are, however, like Fröhner's, reproduced from the plaster casts taken by order of Napoleon III.; see also *Trajan's Dakische Krige nach dem Saülen relief erzählt*, von. E. Petersen, Leipzig, 1899.—Ed.]

And if we ask what are the artistic devices which produce so keen an impression of our having seen an uninterrupted series of events, we shall find that it is again the *continuous* method of representation which alone can arouse this feeling. It alone can make town, river, tent, forest, field, soldiers, horsemen, march, sea-voyage, battle, council, glide one into the other, and masses of human creatures crowd together, condense, separate, or break up; it alone knows how to interrupt the perpetual stream periodically by letting the Emperor appear, and thus help the spectator to consider and define the episodes regularly.

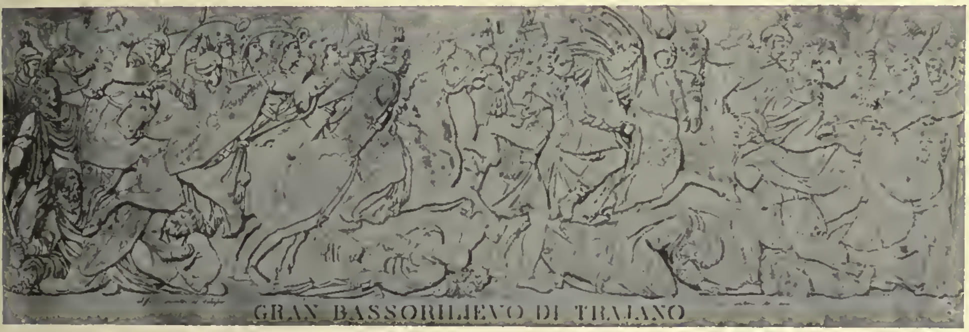

FIG. 42.—Relief from the Forum of Trajan, now on the Arch of Constantine (After Rossini)

The sort of task that this *continuous* principle of representation set itself in Trajan's time is shown by a work in which the illusionist style seems to open all its flood-gates. Shattered, broken, placed at a wrong height, taken from a Trajanic monument to adorn the arch of Constantine, yet the "Battle of the Dacians" has to this day scarce lost any of its original vigour.* (Fig. 42.)

Extreme naturalness of movement is here combined with *an ideal treatment of time.* This makes it possible to crowd battle and victory together into a narrow space. In the midst of the fray, which runs its course at one end of the design, the Emperor is thundering against his enemies, while the other end is occupied by a peaceful scene in which *Roma* welcomes the hero and *Victory* crowns him. The spectator who has assimilated this work knows that a new sphere has been opened to art, and, therefore, will not be surprised that a narrative style which could produce such a masterpiece held its own for fifteen centuries, survived the decline of artistic power, and accompanied the revival of art among foreign peoples, because no other kind of narrative could approach it in vitality and force.

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* Rossini, *loc. cit.*, Tav. 71. [Good photographs of these sculptures have now at last been taken by D. Anderson, see Preface.—ED.]

At this point we might bring our reflections to a close. *A new Western and Roman art* has risen before our eyes. Developed in orderly succession from the traditional art practice of the Italic peoples, it introduced with illusionism into the antique a final principle which is at work to the present day. With the establishment of this principle the development of art, that had begun in Egypt and passed through so many different phases among the peoples of the Mediterranean basin, is completed and closed. An incessantly active imagination had allied itself to the realistic tendencies of this Western art, and out of the materials that deceptive illusionism offered had created a new kind of narrative, the *continuous*. This was the bright, waving flower that grew on the strong root of realism. The fact that, in representing the Emperor's exploits, this method made itself completely master of *relief* was what gave it a stability which saved it from passing as a mere fashion, and ensured its continuance for the future.

By a physiological reaction the second century B.C. saw the bombastic baroque manner superseded by a style of jejune simplicity which was modified in the last centre of Hellenic culture in Rome into a severe naturalism. Then this, in its turn, was overpowered by Italian illusionist art, which pervaded the whole Roman Empire after the middle of the first century A.D. Thus, from these considerations, we might already say that Christian art, which began to develop three centuries after the conquest of Hellenism by the West, was evolved, not out of the remains of Hellenism, but out of the remains of Roman illusionist art, which had by that time reached its last stage, and we shall not be surprised to find that Christian art took hold of that kind of representation which was a specifically Roman product, I mean the *continuous narrative* style.

If it were our task here to follow out the development of Roman sculpture, and to notice the modifying influence which it brings to bear on illusionism, we should have to examine the triumphal relief of the Antonines,* and to observe how the crowd, which we saw closely packed on the arch of Trajan, begins to loosen, how three or four citizens, as in Shakespeare's Roman tragedies, detach themselves from the multitude, and, treated almost like free figures, step to the front edge with expressive gestures. We should see how in this way a style of relief is formed in which figures nearly in the round are scattered over a plastic landscape, as, for instance, in the relief representing women descending to the shore, in Berlin (*Beschreibung der Antiken Skulpturen*, 955), or how separately worked figures in a framework of their own † are combined into groups, as in the extant examples from Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, until a sudden revulsion of style at the end of the movement gives us the flat map-like relief of the arch of Severus. In doing this we should have to dissipate the prejudices which hang about later imitations of Greek works of art. These imitations are often criticised because of their broad generalisation, though the truth is that they were purposely contrived so as to bring out only the general lines of the composition. For in the Augustan age the charm of Greek sculpture had taken such a hold of taste that in course of time no important building would have been thought complete without the clear-cut decorative effects of Greek statues. And yet these statues, copied without modification for the deeply-bayed *exedræ*, the high *atticæ* and extensive gardens of the Romans, would have lost all distinctness and modulation for the distant spectator. Accordingly an intelligent architect would get his masons to alter these copies in view of the effect intended from the positions they were to occupy; the result of suppressing details and of emphasising main lines would be to produce the illusion that genuine antique statues were perched up there, whereas in reality originals would have been dwarfed by the massiveness of the structure. Then we should have to pass in review the ideal sculpture of the Romans, and first those delicate statues of maidens of the Augustan period, in which the sculptors could not sufficiently satisfy themselves in the realistic imitation of stuffs and their folds, and which, in spite of their finicking execution, are not wanting in distinction. We have an example in the so-called Polyhymnia of the Berlin Museum,* and many other female figures with veil-like draperies. Next we might go on to those glorious draped statues displaying the full force of illusionism which, under the guiding flow of the lines, produce a waving pictorial effect quite foreign and unknown to Greek art. A good instance is the grandly conceived figure of a girl carrying a vase in the Capitoline Museum in the Room of the Dying Gaul.† The solemn gait of the figure is rendered with a success that no other style could have achieved. Then we should have to follow the further evolution of this treatment of drapery as we see it in the "Sleeping Ariadne," and trace out the progress of illusionism in the East where, in Egypt, in the second century of our era, it could still produce a work like the Nile of the Braccio Nuovo, and finally watch its decline. But for our limited purpose it must suffice to have explained by some few selected examples the genesis and character of Roman sculpture, and to have touched on the circumstances under which the *continuous narrative* style was formed, so as to be able to turn our attention to the remains of contemporary painting, and at the same time make clear the transformations which the *continuous* method of representation brought about in the handling of mythological material. Hitherto we have traced this constantly shifting movement only in sculpture, and must now deal with the question whether changes in the art of painting did not contribute to the development and establishment of the *continuous* principle. An enduring art tendency does not spring from one source alone, but we may compare it to a stream; many tributaries must feed it till the current runs strong and full, and if we want to describe, be it only its upper course, we must yet not neglect to trace these secondary streams.

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* [The reliefs of the Antonine column itself have now been superbly published from original photographs, see *Marcus-Saüle auf Piazza Colonna, herauszegeben von E. Petersen, A. v. Domaszewski and G. Calderini*, Munich 1895.—Ed.]

† To avoid all misunderstanding I may here mention that in the same way I consider the Prometheus group from Pergamon in Berlin published by Milchhöfer (42nd Winckelmanns-programm, Berlin, 1882), to be of Antonine date or later.

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* [*Beschreibung*, 221.]

† [Helbig, *Collections*, 528.]

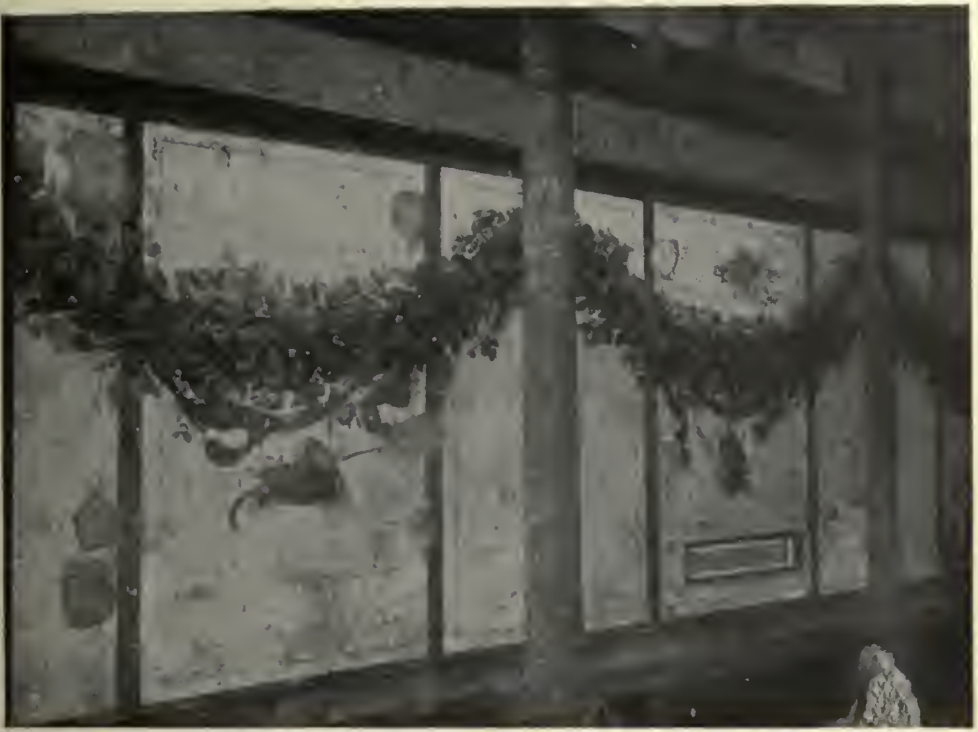

Fig. 43.—Garlands of Fruit, Foliage, and Flowers from the House of Germanicus on the Palatine

IV

WHEN Christian art developed out of Roman, at the time when the latter was drawing to a close but was not quite exhausted, painting had resisted the general tendency to dissolution longer and more powerfully than sculpture. Christian art accordingly could borrow a greater number of schemata still capable of vital development from painting than from sculpture. About the beginning of the third century of the Empire, or even towards the end of the second, the new compositions of the painters appear to have exercised more influence than those of the sculptors. It has been repeatedly pointed out that the reliefs on the Roman sarcophagi are pictorial in character, and the term is used not merely with reference to the treatment, but correctly designates the fact that these reliefs repeat subjects previously introduced by painting. To be sure, the explanation usually offered was that the Roman sculptors of these reliefs sought their prototypes in paintings of the age of the Diadochi, for it was long the custom to think of Hellenism as of the seething-cauldron in the Temple at Jerusalem, and to imagine the Romans, like the sons of Eli, striking their flesh-hooks into the cauldron and greedily bringing out their portion of raw flesh.

Such an explanation, however, must surprise us after we have observed, in our study of Roman art, the normal evolution of a national school of sculpture beginning with the birth of an *illusionist* style and proceeding in its due course of development to the *continuous* method of representation. This leads us to suppose that during the same period a similar growth may have taken place in painting, and at any rate it will not be lost time to resume our inquiry by considering whether the transplanting of Greek art from the east to the west conditioned a new style in painting, as we know it did in sculpture, and whether this style, as it progressed, finally issued in those compositions which are imitated on the Roman sarcophagi.

In its early stages illusionism is easier to observe, and its essence easier to define in painting than in sculpture, because in the plastic art illusionism is limited to a simple *tendency* to reproduce momentary effects, while the means employed are different and depend less on rules than on the artist's own fine schooling. Illusionist painting, on the other hand, is the result of a progressive and increasingly thoughtful and accurate observation of Nature, which requires for its realisation methods of art entirely different from those employed in previous phases of observation of Nature. Hence pictures treated on the illusionist principle form an easily recognisable class entirely distinct from all works produced in earlier periods of art.

Let us try to make clear this essential difference between *naturalistic* and *illusionist* painting. In translating an object that we see before us into a representation on the flat, the art which precedes illusionism, whether in ancient or modern times, strives first of all to inter-relate the determining forms in a self-contained composition, be this by means of bounding lines, as in earlier periods, or by graduated modelling, as in more advanced periods. And this is the case not only when the typical visual image no longer conditions the representation on the flat, but when naturalism, with its close attention to details, steps in and limits the painter's art to the rendering of bodily form. We can observe this best in the art of the fifteenth century. Italian, Flemish and German painters all prepared themselves for the production of a picture in one and the same way. They made preparatory studies in Nature of all the details and gave to these plastic projection. They observed the laws of linear perspective, they carefully observed the changes in the more distant objects caused by the intervening air, but while they drew the figures in the foreground from the model, working out separately the faces, hands, feet, folds of drapery, jewels, &c., they treated the figures of the middle distance in just the same way, and they even made up the background out of studies from Nature accommodating the eye each time to the relative distance. Hence the completed picture in spite of the strict observance of *one* perspective point of sight,* is not the result of *one* definite act of vision, but is rather an amalgamation of the impressions received in several acts of vision, for each of which the eye must be separately focused. The naturalist, in his eager desire for reality, did not grasp the truth that his picture was no reproduction of what is seen at a glance, but rather the result of continuous study of the object to be represented, a result, taken all in all, which, in spite of the picture's plastic effect, springs as much as ever did the typical style of defined contours, from the transforming power of mind. In the next stage, by means of *chiaroscuro* and observance of reflections, a nearer approach to reality was attempted, though the rendering of the actual bodily form of an object, not its appearance to the eye, remained the aim of art.

Leonardo da Vinci has, in numberless studies, defined, examined and reduced to a system the principles on which these naturalists worked. His precepts may be said to run continually upon the necessity, first, of preparatory study in anatomy, optics, and the like, in order to gain knowledge of bodies and their regular alternations of effect, and, secondly, of thinking out means for reproducing as a self-contained entity the form now known and understood. The form, the effect in relief, is always his aim, hence all his rules, such as the choice of a north light for the studio, and of a cloudy day for drawing, all tend to obtain the softest possible gradation of shadows in the transitions. Since subjects taken at random scarcely ever exhibit even gradations of modelling, the necessary artistic conditions have to be artificially called into existence.

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* [*Augpunkt.*]

The moment came, however, when painters of genius, trained by the long practice in seeing which they owed to naturalism, recognised that *appearance* had nothing in common with their ingenious and careful studies and preparations; that a body seen in its own colours and in a chance light, does not exhibit that consistent modelling of a relief seen in the artificial light of the drawing-school; its image is the result rather of contiguous and entirely dissimilar values of light and of their physiological effect upon the eye—in other words, that the image which a given object presents to our eye is not that of a softly modelled relief, but, so to speak, it is a *congeries* of patches and spots differing from each other in colour and in degree of illumination; that these do not by any means produce self-contained forms, but that we first evolve the forms from them by the aid of unconscious (subconscious) reminiscences derived from our previous knowledge of the bodies themselves; above all, that all the objects in a picture are not perceived with equal distinctness at the same time, but that only those on which the attention is fixed can be clearly observed, while the others, be they nearer or farther away, become more or less hazy in form and outline, and that this process is quite irrespective of the familiar toning-down effect caused by the intervention of air.

The painter who has made these observations and worked them out for himself—they can, of course, be made without being formulated—will no longer try to compose his pictures out of material details, modelled throughout, and out of specially contrived and selected determinations of form, but will juxtapose those tones of colour that correspond to the actual phenomenon, *and their combination into objects will be effected not by means of the brush blending them together upon the picture, but precisely as in the act of vision by the supplementary experience of the spectator.* The stylist and the naturalist alike make themselves responsible for the last touches by which form is finally isolated, and they then present it for the spectator to grasp as a thing separate and outside him. But the illusionist, on the contrary, forces the spectator to perform the final act which combines impressions into shape, and while thus making him help in the production of form he arouses in his mind the compelling conviction that what he sees is real, just because he has allowed him to be mentally a party to the deception. The painter, by employing the means which the illusionist style has at command, induces the spectator to go through analogous physiological processes to those of the act of vision. The spectator no longer finds himself confronted with a representation in the reality of which he may believe or not, but he finds himself compelled to materialise the image in precisely the manner which the painter has predisposed him to. There is no fear, however, of this process degenerating into barren copying of Nature ; this is a notion that can only be entertained by a thoughtless public who never get beyond the subject of a picture, for to translate three dimensional natures into a design on the flat demands so much intellectual effort and power of transmutation that there can never be any question of copying in any sense. Both kinds of representation are founded on selection, but the selection of elements which combine into a picture only by the subjective co-operation of the spectator is the highest and sublimest stage of formative art. As soon as this principle is discovered, the choice of colours, always restricted in the case of the naturalist, becomes freer. Imagination found a wider scope than ever before ; this reminds us of how Rembrandt created for himself an illusionist fairy-land full of forms and tones of his own invention.

We do not need to go down to the seventeenth century, when the illusionist style was general and fully developed, to be convinced of the freedom as regards choice of subject which it encouraged. We can already observe in Jacopo Tintoretto, the first great initiate of the sixteenth century, how the new style brought new solutions of all problems, and we look with amazement at his scenes crowded with figures, lit up by a wondrous reflected light, whether by day or by night, in the open air or in half obscurity, in magic landscapes or within strange fantastic palaces.

When did illusionism, we now ask, make its appearance in ancient painting? And had it already in antiquity attained mastery over every pictorial problem?

Fortunately it will not be impossible to give a decided answer to this question, thanks to the pictures found in the cities of Campania, and which are the bulk of extant antique painting. The date of these pictures lies precisely between the period which, after seeing the introduction into Rome of Hellenistic sculpture in its dry naturalistic manifestations, witnessed its peculiar later developments there, and the period when out of this naturalistic manner arose the national Roman illusionist style. Although we are not justified in assuming that this revolution in art (on the hypothesis that it took place on parallel lines in painting and in sculpture) made itself felt in the same manner and at the same time in Rome, where it was at home, and in Campania, where it had to meet with foreign influences, we may at least hope to find in Campania phenomena which will help to explain and supplement the scanty Roman material we have at command. It will be best to begin by summing up the main points in the researches of August Mau, and published by him in his well-known work on the history of decorative wall-painting in Pompei,* and to base upon this summary the conclusions which bear upon the subject in hand.

Till about the third decade of the first century B.C.† it was the custom, in Pompei as elsewhere, to decorate the walls in the interior of houses or public buildings with stucco slabs made to imitate incrustations in marble and harder stones. These decorations in Pompei have their parallels in Pergamon‡ and Magnesia. Vitruvius is evidence§ for the widely spread popularity of this kind of ornamentation, called by Mau the *Incrustation Style.* Shortly after the year 80 these ornamental slabs were almost entirely superseded by wall-painting, which means that designs were actually executed on the wall with the artist's brush, whereas formerly the mason could supply the decoration by tinting the stucco. Yet it seems that the custom of incrusting walls with costly slabs was kept up in the case of public buildings and structures made for show, such as the baths; it is still to be seen in many old Christian basilicas, and was again imitated by painting during the time of Diocletian, as is admirably proved by the rooms in the house of the Martyrs John and Paul, lately found in Rome. Later on this "slab style" began to be applied to the outside of buildings, and the history of Italian architecture in the Middle Ages is conditioned in many ways by its further development and provincial variations.

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* August Mau, *Geschichte der decorativen Wandmalerei in Pompei*, Berlin 1882. [English students will find it convenient to refer to Mau's new book (trans. Kelsey), "Pompei, its Life and Art," New York and London, 1899.—Ed.]

† A. Mau, *loc. cit.* p. 287.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 108.

§ Vitruvius, VII. 5, 1.

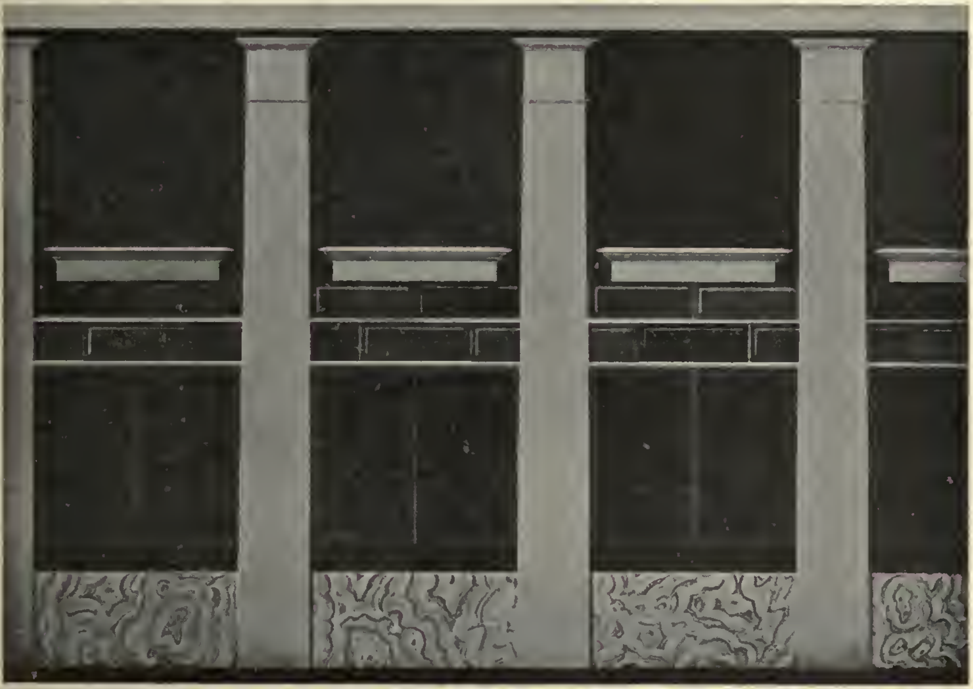

FIG. 44.—Pompeian Wall Painting in the First or Incrustation Style (After Mau, Plate II.)

Now what had happened at the beginning of the first century B.C. to facilitate the almost exclusive employment of painting in the decoration of rooms, a purpose for which it had hitherto proved as a rule inadequate? Mau does not enter on this question. The secret, however, must lie in the discovery of a new process, making the act of painting quicker and accordingly cheaper. Now the paintings in Pompei and those of the same period found in Rome and elsewhere are worked *al fresco*, a technique which is not mentioned in earlier times, and which, by comparison with the process of encaustic previously in vogue, was incredibly shorter, and thus brought pictures more within reach of the general public. The invention of *fresco* made it easy to cover *all* the walls of rooms with paintings, and even in Nero's time Encolpius complains that painting has declined "after the Egyptians had the audacity to invent a shortened process for this great art."*

Mau distinguishes three styles in the decorative wall-painting of Pompei after the first or "Incrustation" style. This new wall-painting at once abandons the principle of the first style by which the wall was adorned with slabs arranged in a decorative manner; instead, it treats the wall as a field for an architectonic design which enlarges the space enclosed by these walls into a vista. The wall is, so to speak, made to disclose fictitious rows of columns, on bases or otherwise supported. Between these columns again, rises a fictitious wall ornamented with incrustations, often stopping short of the height of the real wall, so that we seem to see over it into a room still further beyond, a *concha* or a landscape.† Very soon the custom arises of distinguishing the middle of each wall by a small projecting temple porch deceptively represented in painting and forming a kind of framework through which the spectator sees a mythological composition or the like.‡ All the painted buildings imitate real or possible architecture, and the materials of the

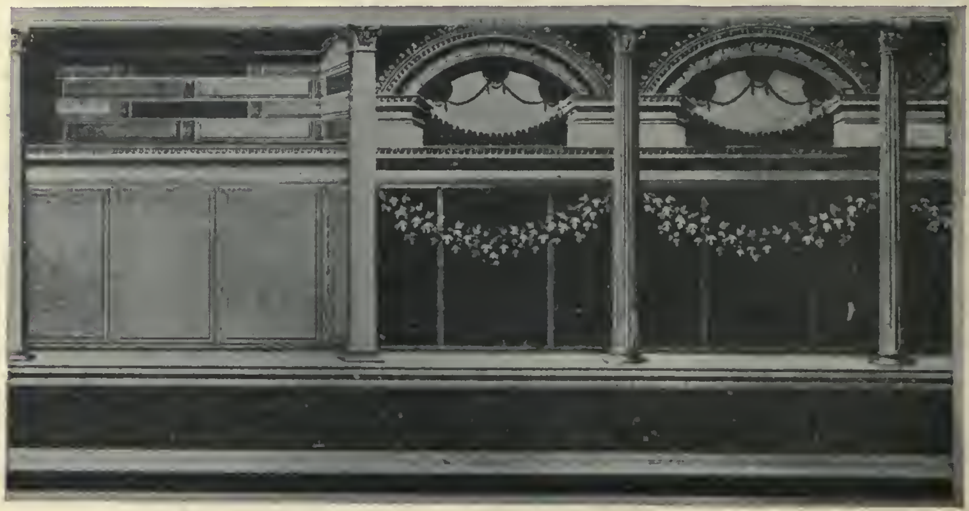
FIG. 45.—Pompeian Wall Painting in the Second or Architectural Style (After Mau, Plate IV.)

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* Petronius, 2.

† A. Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. III., IV.

‡ *Ibid.* Taf. V., VI.

architecture and its parts are imitated from natural substances, such as stone, wood, bronze, glass. Mau calls this second stage the *Architectural Style* (Fig. 45).

This style is followed, as Mau explains at length,* about the middle of the century by a third kind of decoration. While in the second style plastic parts such as bases, columns, and cornices are faithfully copied from actual models, in the third style their architectonic significance vanishes, and, although the arrangement of the parts as regards the central structure and the horizontal and vertical division of the wall is retained, the whole design approaches much more nearly to the purely decorative character of ornament on the flat. The rooms belonging to this style may easily be recognised by the white or light-coloured vertical stripes and pilasters with a peculiar ornamentation foreign to later ancient art.† Mau calls this third style the *Ornate Style*, and notes the year 50 A.D. as the approximate lower limit of its survival (Fig. 46).

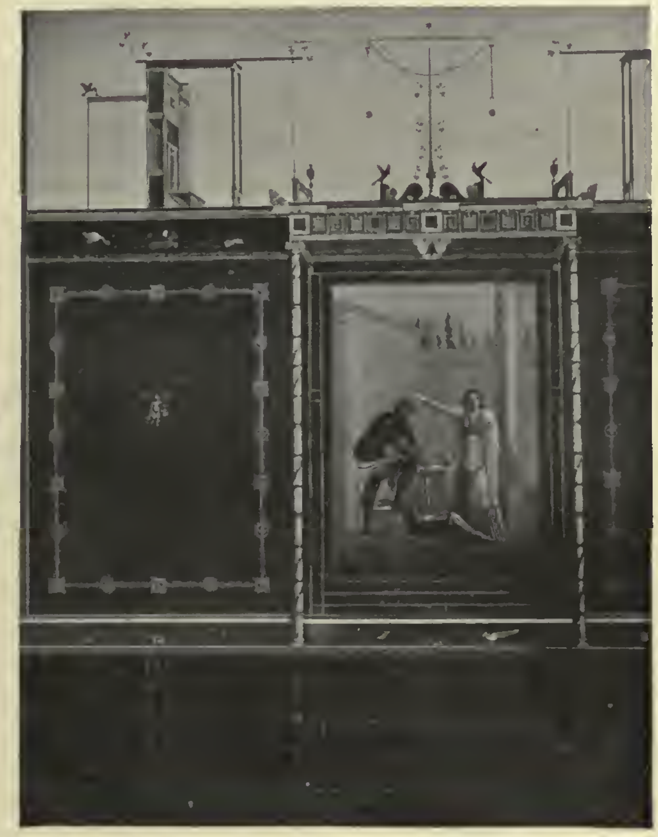

FIG. 46.—Pompeian Wall Painting in the Third or Ornate Style (After Mau, Plate XII.)

The last days of Pompei up to the year of its destruction, 79 A.D., are occupied by a fourth style. Again the walls are decorated with architectural pieces, but this time the architecture is fantastic, not real. This style is almost the only one represented in the numerous existing

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* A. Mau, *loc. cit.* pp. 287, 409–448.

† *Ibid.* Taf. X.–XX.

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publications on Pompei. Since the rediscovery of Pompei, generations of artists have borrowed these motives, just as Raphael and his pupils admired, studied, and used the motives of the Thermæ of Titus which were painted in the same style (Fig. 47).

No analogy could apparently be found for this development,* and it is astonishing to see how an ornamentation on the flat evolved itself out of the kind of painting which employed the methods of perspective decoration, and how, after a comparatively short space of time, the course of evolution was reversed and painting again arrived at an architectonic style, only differing from the earlier one in points of detail.†

Now the *second* style, with its *heavy naturalistic imitation of real buildings,* is simply the reflex in painting of Hellenistic sculpture which appears in Rome in the first century, and which bears precisely the same sober and pedantic character. The painstaking imitation of all details which we see on the walls at Pompei, takes us right back to Augustan Rome; it is in the Villa of Livia, near Prima Porta, on the very spot on which stood the most famous plastic work of that period—the statue of Augustus in armour—that we find the principal example of this naturalistic decorative art. It is true that the room in the villa is adorned, not with imitations of architecture, but with the imitation of a garden where fruit-trees, rare shrubs, and ornamental plants, copied with painstaking accuracy, unite in forming a kind of hedge of verdure (Figs. 48, 49); the ornament, moreover, is in better taste than wall decorations in the second style in Pompei, where the oldest, at any rate, such as those of the "*Casa del Labirinto*,"‡ are unique among the wall decorations of all time as examples of an obstinate craze for wooden and exact imitation. But we do see on later Pompeian walls and in the House of Germanicus on the Palatine (Figs. 50, 51) signs of a change in the second style, of a tendency, that is, to imitate, not actual architectural features, such as could

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* Mau now speaks of the "Fourth or Intricate Style" (Mau-Kelsey, p. 45, ff.).

† The following remarks are substantially a repetition of what I published in the *Mittheilungen des Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* (Wien, 1882, Jahrg. XVII. p. 94 ff.). Mau has since admitted the existence of Egyptian ornament in the third style. *Cf.* Overbeck-Mau, *Pompei*, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1884, p. 525.

‡ A. Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. III., IV. (see our Fig. 45).

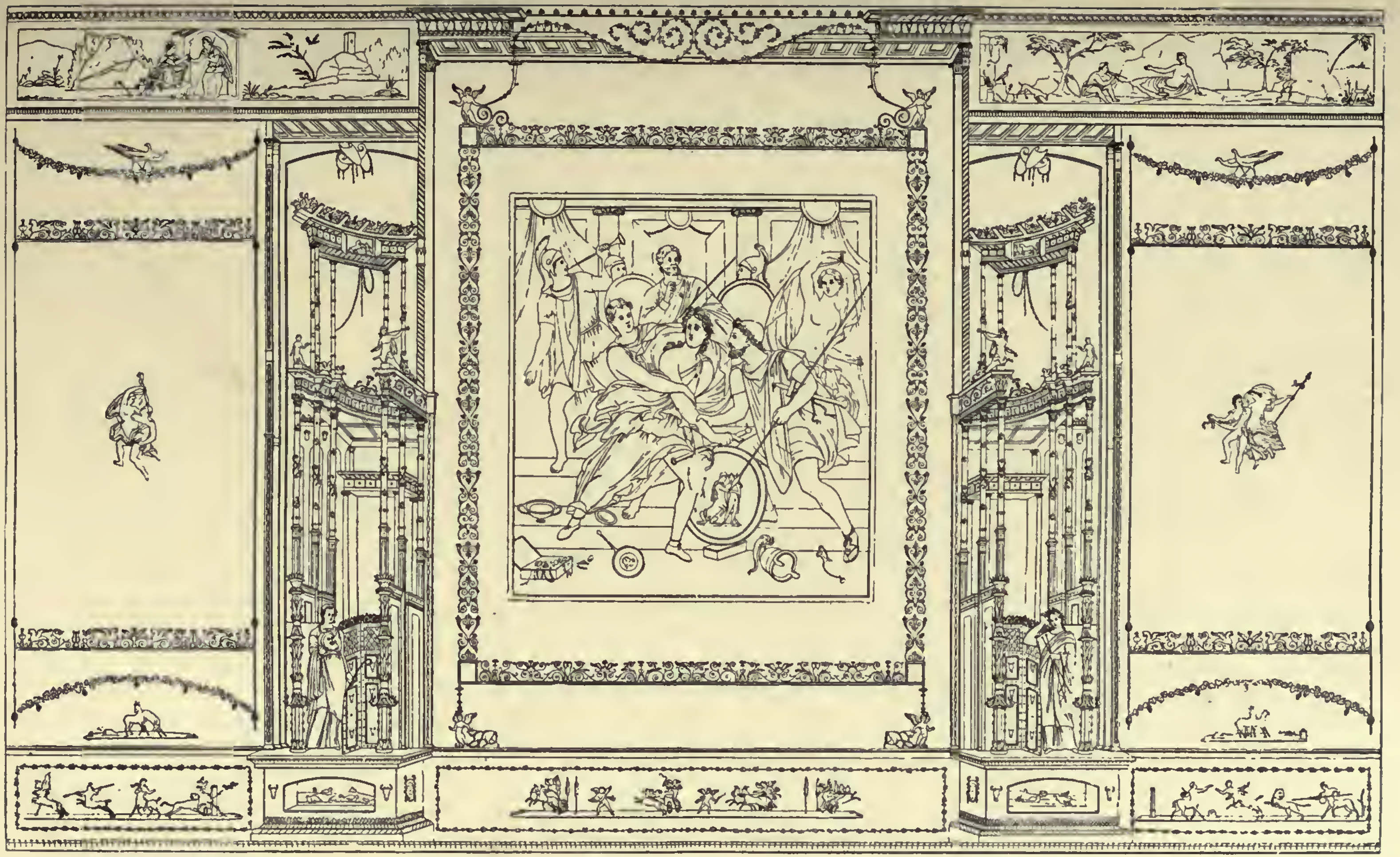

FIG. 47.—Pompeian Wall Decoration in the Fourth Style (After Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, Fig. 1528)

have been employed at the time, but imaginary, though still possible, buildings.* Vitruvius, who was himself a kind of incarnation of Augustan naturalism, lived long enough to see this change in style and regretted that architectural pieces should be invented according to the painter's fancy instead of being copied as heretofore from real buildings. *Neque enim picturæ probari debent, quæ non sunt similes veritati!* † As soon as the architectural features are free inventions with cornices, trellis work, and vistas crammed with every kind of far-fetched ornament, and crowded in between with figures, some of which represent coloured statues and some actual persons, there is nothing left to distinguish this style from the last *Architectural Style* of Pompei, except the difference in pictorial treatment, which in Pompei is no longer *naturalistic*, but *illusionist*. We may think of the walls of the fourth style as bearing the same relation to the walls of the second as the sculptures of the Arch of Titus bear to those of the *Ara Pacis*, and we may explain the two analogies in the same way.

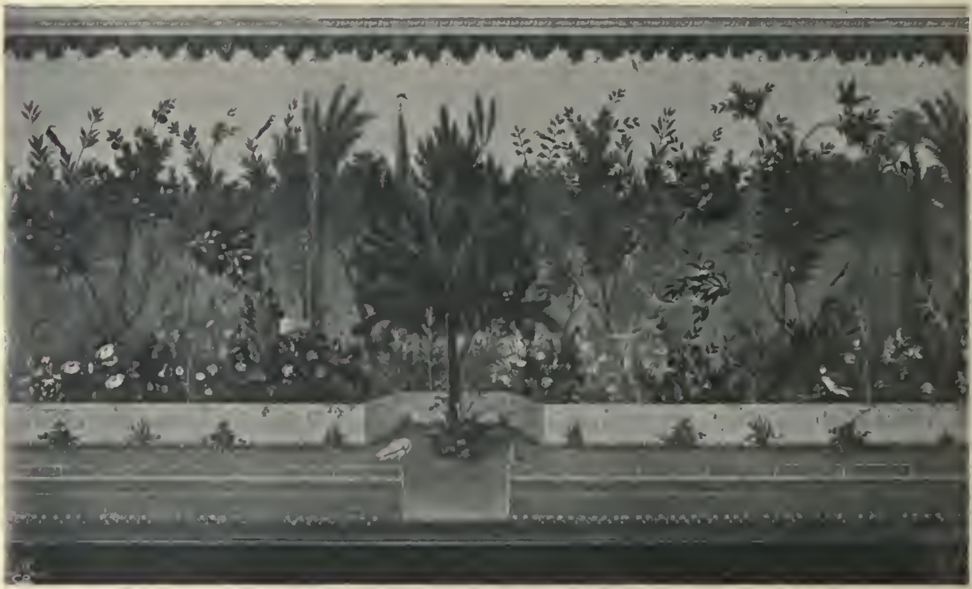

FIG. 48.—Wall Decoration from the Villa at Prima Porta, restored (After *Antike Denkmäler*, Plate XI.)

Before turning to this new kind of painting let us once more recall the opinion expressed by Petronius that the technique of fresco painting was invented by the Egyptians.* The earliest Pompeian wall-paintings correspond closely with the empty grandeur of late Ptolemaic art, and therefore it will not surprise us if here and there on the walls of the second style we meet with ancient Egyptian figurines, or even ancient Egyptian decorative forms. The bulk of these prototypes was too familiar to the artists of Alexandria, which must have been a centre for the diffusion of this kind of wall-painting, not to have influenced them from time to time.

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* A Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. VII., IX.

† Vitruvius, VII. 5, 4.

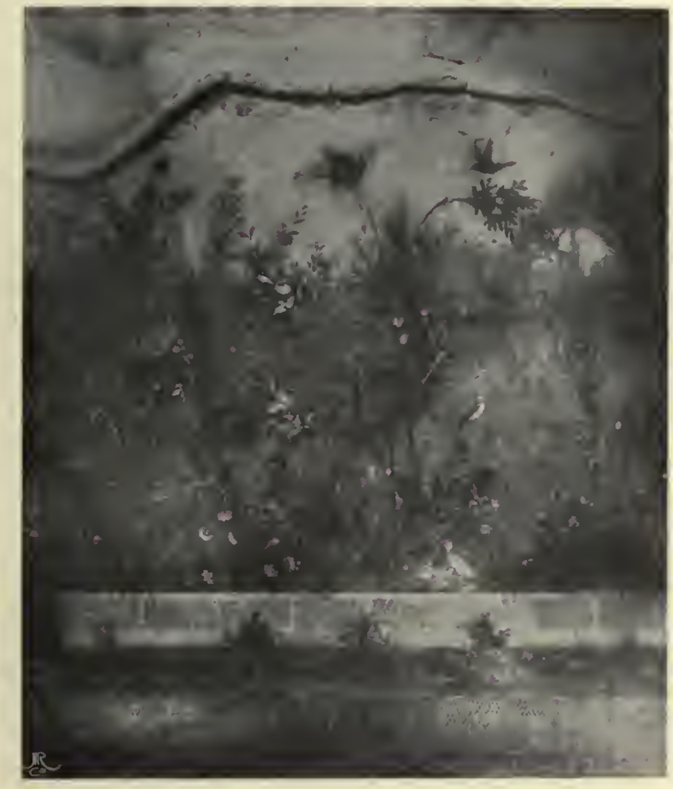
FIG. 49.—Detail (unrestored) from Wall-Painting in the Villa at Prima Porta

This happened at first only occasionally.† It was a consequence of that decadence of Greek art which, even in Attica, had led in the first century to a kind of Renascence of more ancient art. This movement was different from the contemporary copying of ancient statues and ran parallel to it. It was a Renascence caused by the powerlessness to develop art any further by imitating Nature. Or, looking at the phenomenon from another point of view, we may say that, because the Greeks of that time had exhausted naturalism, and were incapable of really appre-

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* Petronius, 2.

† The most comprehensive example of the adaptation of Egyptian figures in the second style is supplied by a wall in the house of Vesanus Primus (Reg. VI., Jus. XIV., 20); E. Presuhn (*Pompei*, Leipzig 1882, Taf. X for this house) gives an unsatisfactory illustration, the colours not being well reproduced.

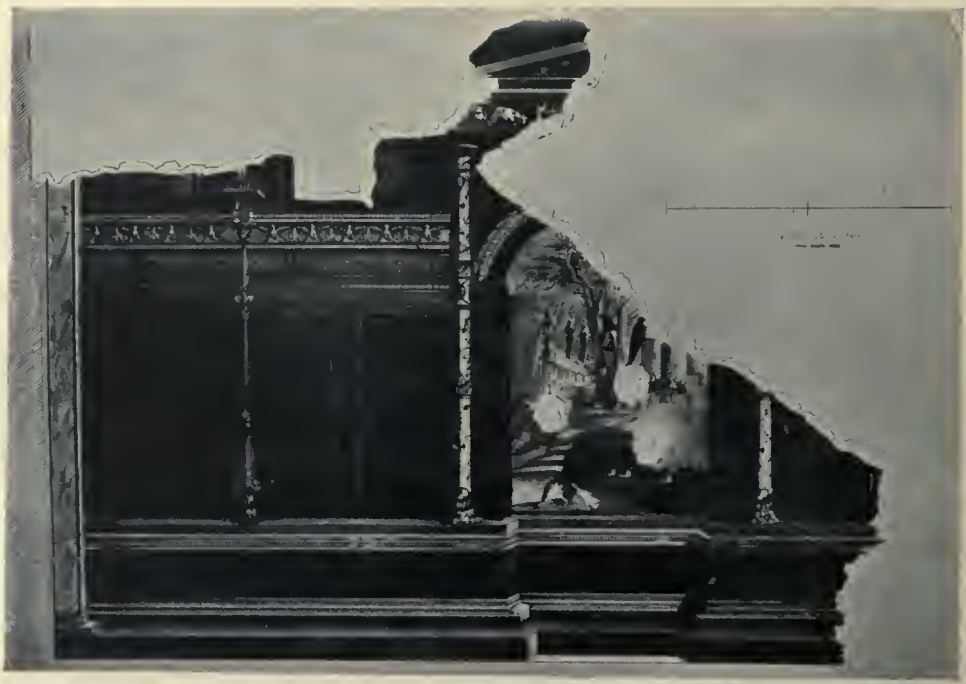

FIG. 50.—Wall-Painting from the House of Germanicus on the Palatine (After Mau, Plate IX.)

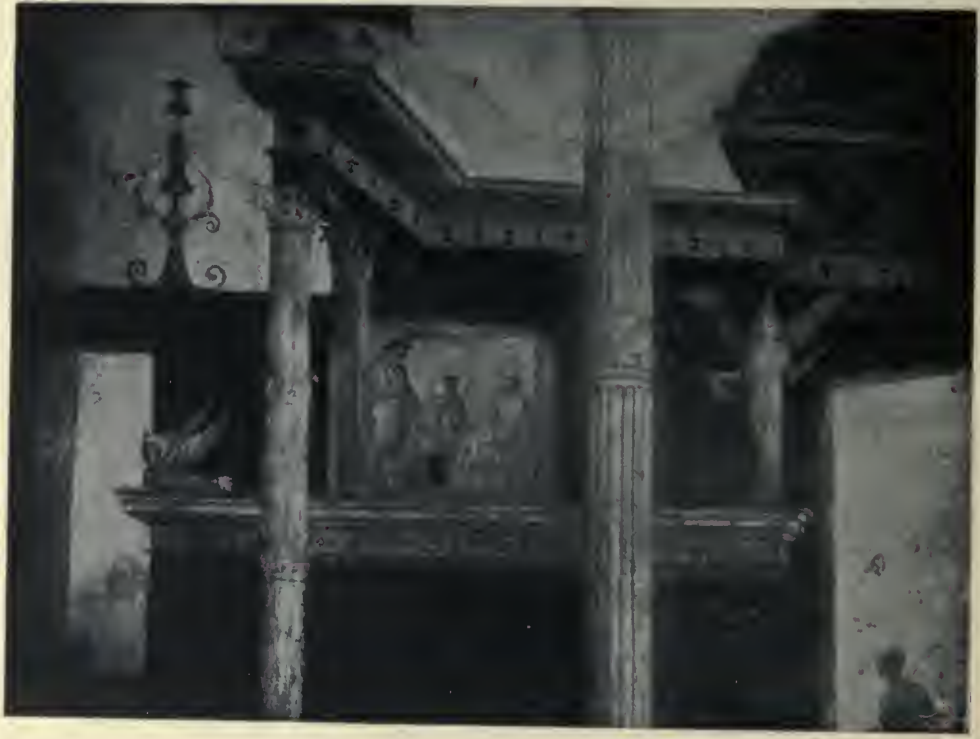

FIG. 51.—Wall-Painting from the House of Cormenicus on the Palatine

hending the illusionist style, there had come to pass in Egypt also a Renascence that was closely connected with the experiments we have mentioned in the second style—in a word, *a Renascence of old Egyptian art.* For those white stripes and pillars in the *third Pompeian style* which divide the walls are entirely non-Hellenic in character, and are borrowed from ancient Egyptian art. Mau expresses the idea very happily in describing a pilaster of this style without, however, drawing the conclusion which seems natural. In speaking of the peculiar ornamentation of the pilaster, he says that from a distance it looks like a band of hieroglyphs.* Now it is not only the ornamentation of these stripes and pilasters that reminds us of ancient Egypt.† The white pillars, with their delicate light-coloured bands and fillets, form another point of similarity ; the egg-shaped and half egg-shaped

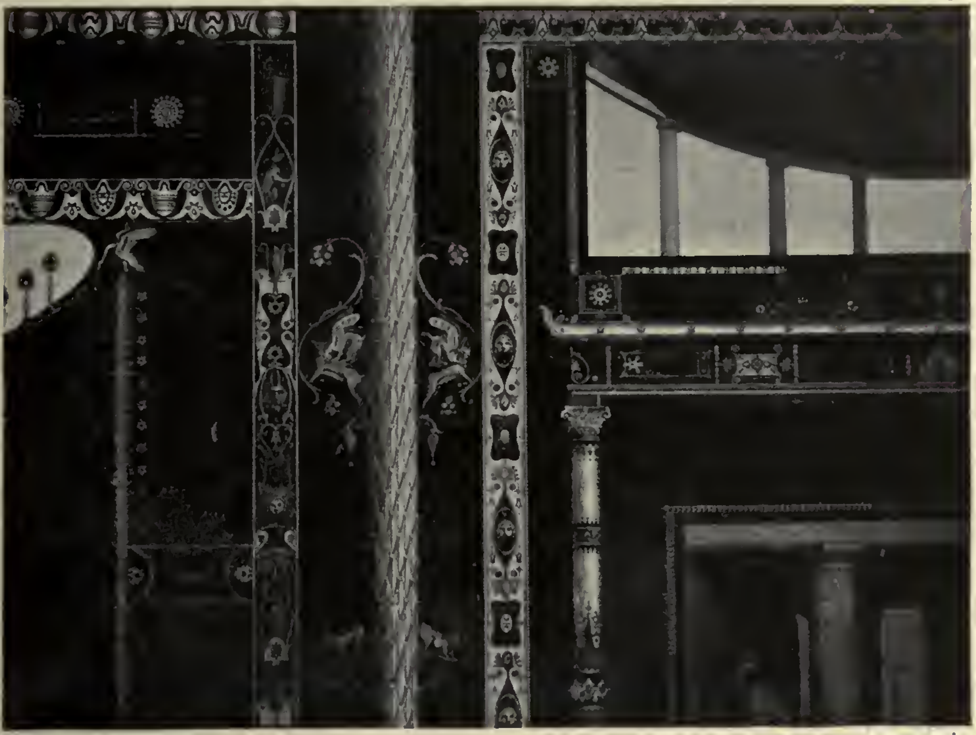

FIG. 52.—Detail of Pompeian Wall-Painting in Third Style (After Mau, Plate XIV.)

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* Mau, *loc. cit.* p. 336.

† *Cf.* Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. XIII.-XIV., and also the old Egyptian prototypes given in Prisse d'Avennes' *Histoire de l'Art Égyptien*, the plates with the capitals of pillars.

designs in the ornament of the third style* are evidently an echo of the Egyptian friezes with alternate lotus flowers and buds;† while in other bands of ornament the lotus flower is still distinctly visible.‡ In connection with the bands of hieroglyphs § purposely imitated, both as regards decorative effect and also separate details from Egyptian designs, we get whole friezes filled with scenes borrowed from ancient Egypt, such as in the Aediculum over the picture of Laocoon.||

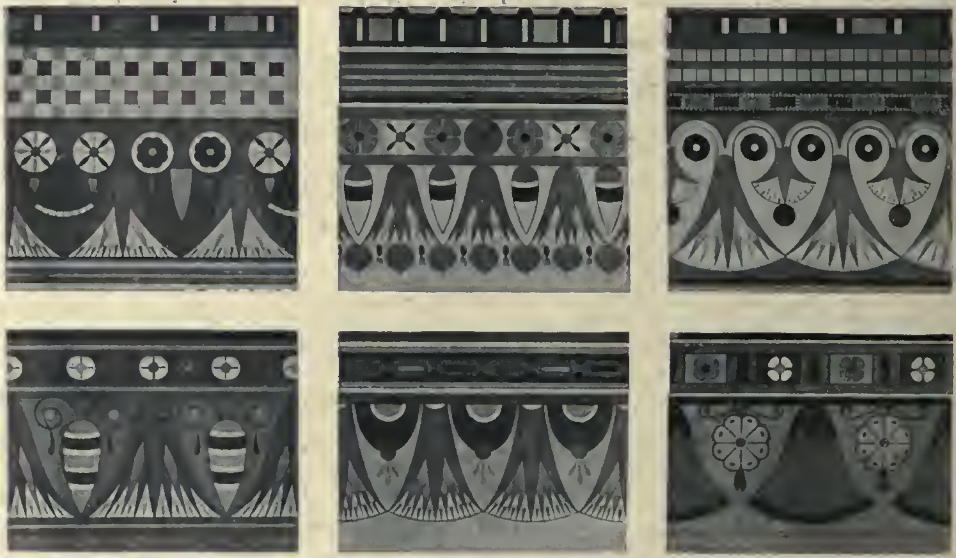

Fig. 53.—Egyptian Lotus Flower Decorations (After *Prisse d'Avennes*)

We see, then, that in Alexandria, perhaps soon after the beginning of our era, a new style had developed out of the *Architectural style* which in the interval had become diffused. Hellenistic art took up Egyptian motives, and altered them to suit its own taste and decorative purposes. The tapestry-like form common to all this decoration and the abandonment of perspective feats of skill are connected with the influence exercised by Egyptian flat ornamentation. This style is incapable of producing large self-contained decorative compositions, but

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* Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. XIV.=our Fig. 52.

† *Cf.* Prisse d'Avennes, *loc. cit.* "Archit. Couronnements et frises fleuronnées," Nécropole de Thèbes, XVIII.–XX. Dynastie No. 7, 9, 10 (after which our Fig. 53).

‡ Mau, *loc. cit.* Taf. XX., the ornament to the left below.

§ *Antichità di Ercolano*, Tom. IV, Tav. LXIX.–LXX.

|| Nicolini, *Descrizione Generale*, Tav. LXVI.–LXX.

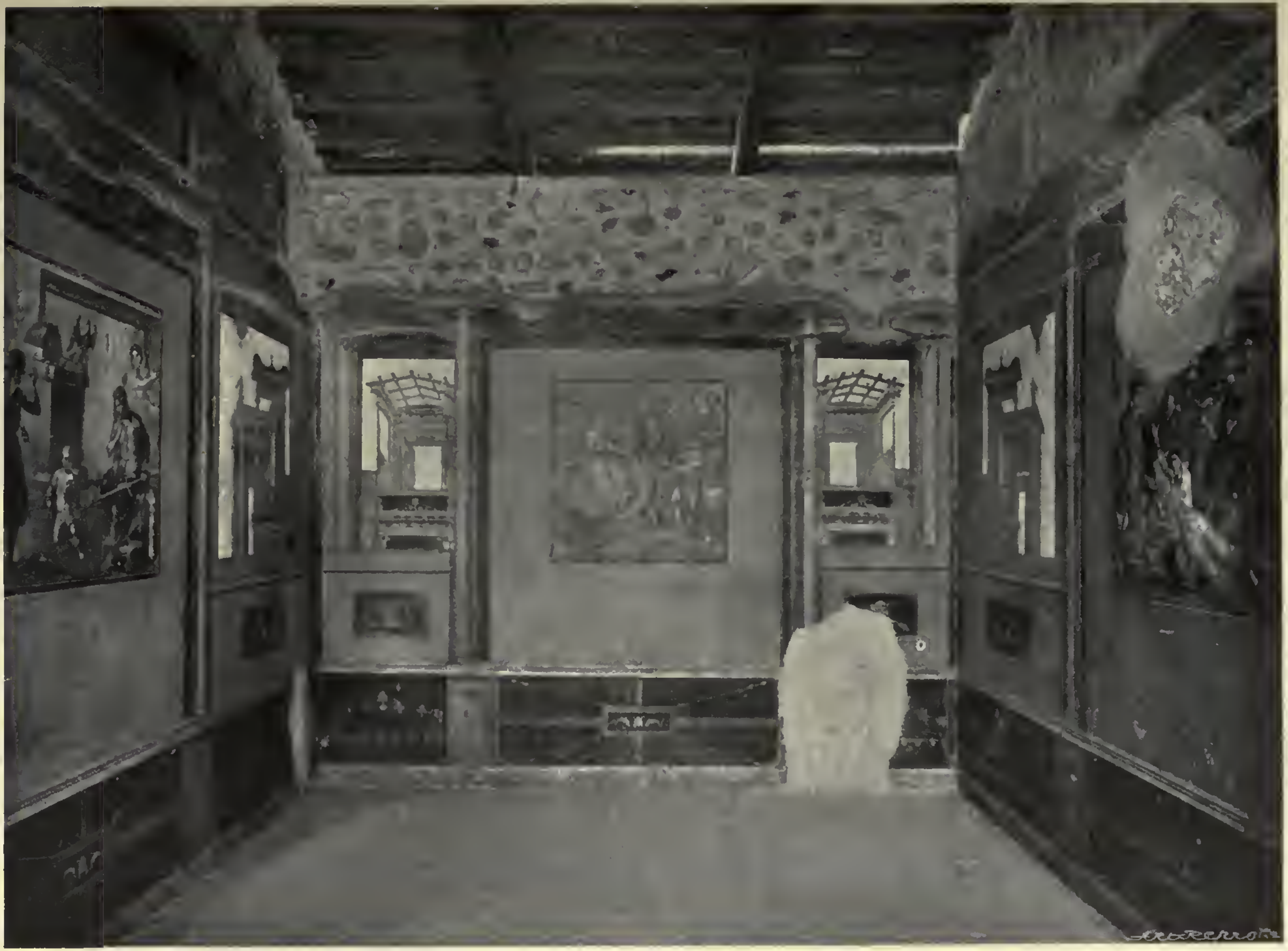

FIG. 54.—Dining Room Decorated in the Fourth Style, from the "Casa Nuova" in Pompei (From a photograph by Messrs. G. Brogi of Florence)

it takes up the old types and associates with them details from Nature, wreaths, peacock-feathers, or anything else likely to enhance the ornamental effect, and with delicate particularity it reduces to a plane surface what was formerly an architectonic scaffolding to support the rest of the design. We should not allow ourselves to be blinded to the general weakness in the whole design by the exact and painstaking execution of the details, simply because these things appeal to our sentiment. For we associate this style with the times of our grandfathers; it recalls to us those old-world country houses where Chinese pattern was modified by artists of the last century just as Egyptian design was modified in Pompei, and where rococo drawing-rooms even presented to our eyes a modification of Egyptian art itself. We should like to imagine the "Hall of the Past" in "Wilhelm Meister" decorated in the third style, for there were sphinxes at the entrance, and "the surface of the walls and of the vaulted roof was regularly divided, and between a gay variety of borders, wreaths, and ornaments there were painted on fields of different sizes imposing or graceful human figures." In "Gross Cophta" also there is a "hall with Egyptian pictures and ornaments." For us this notion has only moderate attraction. Goethe's eye would have rested with appreciative delight on these remains of painting.

The third style, then, is the specially Alexandrian development, or rather degeneration, of the "Architectural style," while the fourth style is nothing but the luxuriant flower of the third, resulting from the influence of Roman illusionist art. One party in the Pompeian schools of painting drew their models from Alexandria, and followed the modifications of art in vogue there; others went to Rome. The two styles existed side by side for some time in the little town, till at last Alexandrian art came to appear antiquated by the side of Roman art in its magnificent progress.

What is called the fourth style is the beginning of *Illusionism* in Pompei. If each part of the structure is no longer carefully elaborated in relation to the others as in those naturalistically treated walls, it is because of the essential conditions of this style of painting. The impression intended is of a peep, as it were, through the wall, and since the "Architectural style" had departed from actual prototypes even in the naturalistic period, the peep must be into a building of the artist's invention. In painting, accordingly, illusionism was the immediate precursor of the fantastic. For instance, we see Apollo seated in a forest of little golden pillars. On the pillars flicker brilliant lights, doors stand open behind leading into other rooms,* so that when we see the gods haunting these castles of Fairyland we do not think of asking if the castles could be built, for they are there before our eyes. By the help of illusionist painting the veil has been drawn from a world of magic. Walls open and we look through into streets glaring in the white light of midday, while garlands woven of trembling sprays of green adorn the walls themselves which are coloured in dark hues. Toy column upon toy column, pediment upon pediment, are heaped one above the other in the brilliant light, while girls in gay clothing wander among them, fantastic animals rear their heads from out the decorations, and the enchanting variety of the spectacle makes the pedantic naturalism at the

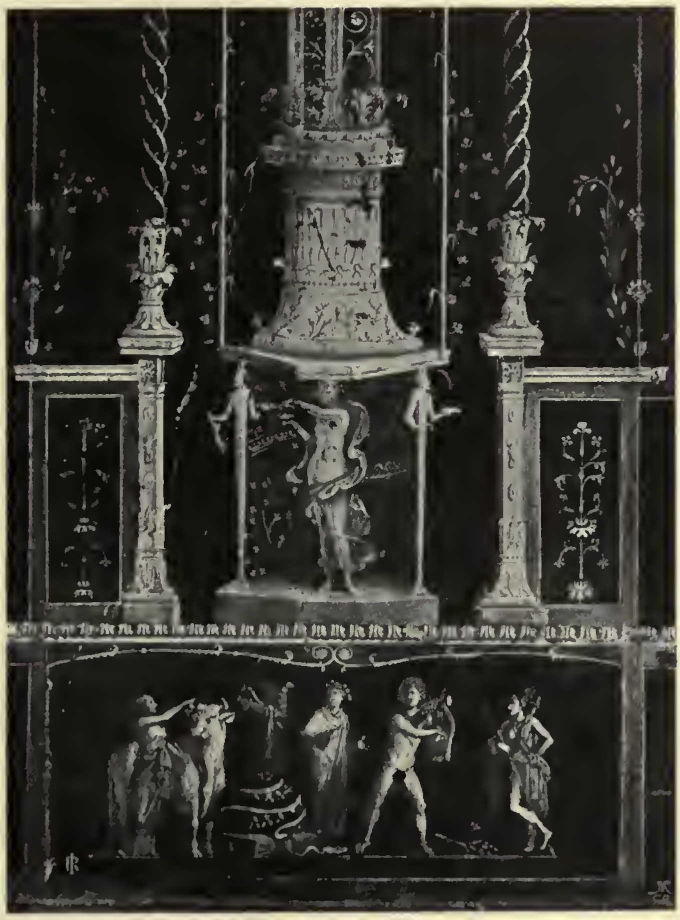

FIG. 55.—Detail of Wall Painting in the Fourth Style, from the "Casa Nuova" (By permission of Messrs. G. Brogi, of Florence †)

beginning of the second style show like the exercises of a drawing-school.

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* Helbig, No. 232.

† Phot. Brogi 11260.

Objects are no longer carefully posed so as to get a rounded effect by skilful arrangement of light and shade. The bright variegated flecks of colour stand side by side and give the illusion of the shimmering southern light. As formative genius and creative fancy grew, imitation of special materials in these "architectural" pieces was abandoned. Sometimes it is the glitter of precious metals with their thickly laid high lights, sometimes the ray is broken with rainbow hues, and the fragile buildings look as if they were made of broken soap-bubbles, or had risen in obedience to the wand of a magician out of frozen drops of dew. Never again has European painting attained in decorative creations such freedom in the choice of colours, and in the utmost refinement of their colour-sense the artists of this style have never been rivalled except by the Japanese, just as their contemporaneous sculpture representing sprays and leaves could be compared only with the most delicate nature-studies of the Eastern Asiatics.

It cannot be denied that there are drawbacks associated with this style in painting as in sculpture; it can be appreciated only in original works. All copies spoil the masters' creations, and painting *di macchia* easily degenerates into smudging when the copyist or the dauber think they can omit the preparatory work, which consists in unwearied training of the hand and penetrative study of Nature, not in a great number of different drawings which are combined into one. Even the painters of the fourth style in Pompei were not all of the first order, as we can easily see if we compare the bulk of the paintings with those of the Macellum, by an artist whose work does not appear again in Pompei, and was perhaps a foreigner, sent for to decorate this building.

Now, according to the common view, we are to associate with this artistic activity, in its ceaseless progress and constant development both in sculpture and decorative painting, an art of figure painting which remained unchanged for all those 160 years, and which took with dull uniformity all its models from the early art of the Diadochi and simply inserted them as they were into the new and constantly changing systems of wall decoration! It is true that in the time of Augustus famous ancient pictures are copied just like famous ancient statues. The marble tablets in the Naples Museum show us what such isolated copies were like; the house in the garden of the Farnesina, how they were fitted into the decoration of the Architectural style.[*] On these walls we see, arranged in separate divisions, pictures which in design and subject form a parallel to the Attic grave reliefs of the fourth century B.C.;[†] imitations of still earlier works which compare in style with the polychrome lecythi;[‡] scenes treated with greater freedom and showing by their spontaneous naturalness that they are subsequent to the great revolution in painting which took place during the reign of Alexander;[§] and finally pictures true to life or degenerating into the baroque style, love scenes, theatre scenes, and mythological scenes, among which those that shew the greatest freedom in movement must be referred to prototypes of the end of the third century or even later.[‖] But in drawing, treatment of form, colouring and composition they plainly show themselves as imitations of earlier styles, and that in spite of the great variety among them and the fact that they illustrate the history of Greek painting just as if they had been selected and placed in a picture-gallery for the purpose. They are quite differently treated, for instance, from the "Priestesses" and the "Education of Bacchus,"[¶] which correspond to the style of the decoration. These two pictures may rank as counterparts in painting of the reliefs in the Palazzo Spada, only more refined and elaborated, but they differ in no wise as to treatment from Pompeian paintings of the second and third style, or even from those of the fourth which are not executed in the illusionist manner. Unsurpassed for beauty among any ancient painting in existence, they rank by their calm, dignified manner as the contemporaries and equals of the *Ara Pacis*. They represent in figure painting the same stage of development as those sculptures and the finished Architectural style, that is to say, they are all fine products of the Hellenistic naturalism of the first century B.C.

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[*] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. Va., XVII., XVIII., XIX., XXIII., XXIV.

[†] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. VI. 2; VII. 1, 2, 4; XXI.

[‡] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. XVIII., XXII. 4, 5; XXVII. 1, 3, 4, 6.

[§] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. VIIa, 1–6.

[‖] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. VIII. 1–5; XXII. 1–3; XXVII. 3, 5; XXVIII.–XXXIII.

[¶] *Monumenti* XII., Tav. VI. 1, XVIII., XX.

Unless we assume an unnatural split in the evolution of painting and sculpture we must premise that the three inter-dependent conditions which obtained in the sculpture of the time hold good also in painting during the period which begins with the spatial concentration of the picture into a self-contained scene, and ends with the development of the illusionist style—*i.e.*, from the third century B.C. to the beginning of the first A.D.

The earliest of these paintings, as, for instance, that on the Ficoronian Cist, revel in a grandiose naturalism; though the artist may not yet understand how to arrange figures one behind another according to the rules of perspective, nor to form groups out of overlapping figures, he yet successfully carries out his aim of rhythmic composition in which each separate figure is foreshortened as in nature. On the vases of Lower Italy we can next trace how painting, in trying to express the uncontrolled licence of passion, loses itself more and more in a kind of overblown Baroque. There was no other period in which it was so difficult for the technique of vase-painting to reflect the artistic tendencies of the time. For the expression of passion in faces, on which depended the whole effect of the narrative part of painting, had to be reduced to its lowest terms in these imitative works, and the gradual melting away of outlines consequent on the growing skill in the rounding of objects could barely be hinted at in an art which depended on contour. All the effort of painting in this period was devoted to grappling with the problem of depth, not with the problems which could be solved by a foreshortened drawing—in this respect the preceding period had attained everything the antique ever could attain—but with those that could only be solved by the "Plein Air" painting which allows forms to melt in the ambient light, and to this method the vase-painters could not make even the most distant approach. Nevertheless they make an honourable effort to rival both in sport and in earnest the unimpeded mobility of the greater art. The effort, however, could not go on beyond a certain limit. There is nothing in vase-painting that resembles the Laocoon; before that the unequal struggle had been abandoned.

If we decline to remain quietly anchored to the stock notion of Hellenism and have realised that in art period follows period in dependence on physiological laws which demand a reaction of quiet after excessive stimulus, we shall better understand how a generation that had had a surfeit of the Laocoon could relish the home-made "Gala Reliefs" and refuse to enjoy any painting except of the quietly sympathetic kind. For to admire the Laocoon and at the same time to abuse Bernini, to praise Thorwaldsen and at the same time to laugh at David, is a feat which hitherto no one but a German "bel-esprit" has been able to perform.

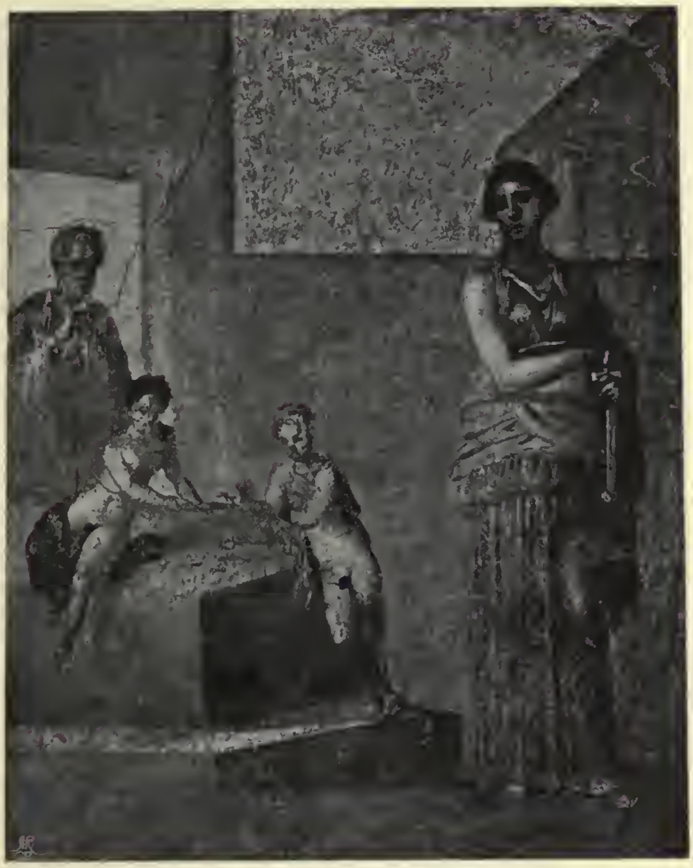

FIG. 56.—Medea meditating the murder of her children (Photograph Alinari)

Therefore in looking through the Pompeian pictures chronologically we must—if we are right in supposing that they represent contemporary painting and reproduce its favourite subjects, expect to see the wild rush of the Baroque succeeded by a tendency to limitation both in feeling and expression, and to find even mythological scenes arranged in a respectable middle-class manner. The most famous picture of the time must have been one that toned down the horror of some wild story. Passions must be calmed by sheer simplicity of presentment. If we could find in Pompei a picture in which the cruel tragedy of Laocoon was still palpitating but treated so as to arouse nothing but gentle melancholy in the spectator, we might be sure that this was the picture most admired by contemporary critics.

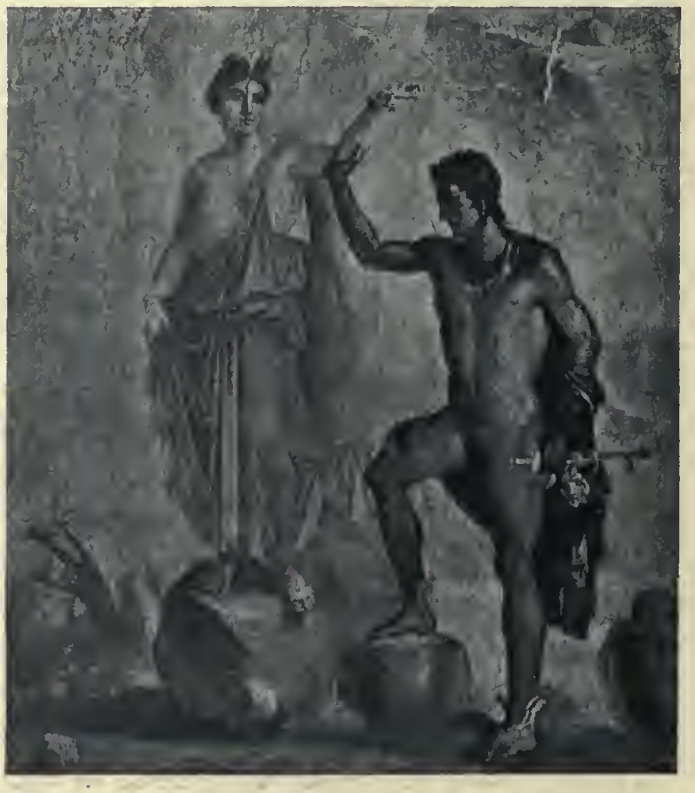

FIG. 57.—Perseus and Andromeda; Pompeian wall painting in Naples (Photograph Alinari)

Of the famous paintings of antiquity mentioned in literature, there is only one that can be identified with certainty in the Campanian cities. It is the "Medea" of Timomachus.* Sung by poets and praised by the general voice of ancient writers on art, we moderns also must confess when we look at the imitations of this composition from the cities of Campania, that if it be a refinement of art to express feelings softened and toned down, then there is no work which comes closer to this ideal A horrible deed is preparing; a mother slays her own children; yet we do not see the act itself, but only its preparation as expressed in the inward purpose of the chief person of the drama (Fig. 56). At the right of the picture stands the mother, motionless as a column; only her eyes and the play of her fingers on the scabbard of the sword betray her dread purpose. Opposite her stands the

* *Cf.* H. Brunn, *Geschichte der griechischen Kunst II.*, 277 f.; Dilthey, *Annali* 1869, p. 46 ff. W. Helbig, *Untersuchungen*, 146 ff.; W. Helbig, *Campanische Wandgemälde*, No. 1262–1264.

anxious pedagogue, drawn with the same definite outlines, and between them the boys are playing, unconscious of danger. The background is formed by a walled courtyard. This composition needs only to be translated into marble in order to be a companion piece to the reliefs of the Palazzo Spada. The manner of the first century as we meet it in sculpture could not be more characteristically illustrated in painting. If we knew nothing about the period of the artist we should have to place him, from the style of his composition, in Cæsar's time; but we are not reduced to hypothesis, for Pliny expressly states that he was a contemporary of Cæsar.[*] In consequence of the scarceness of material for forming an opinion on ancient art in the three centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, and because prejudice against the last of the three ran so high, former cities tried to convict Pliny of error, and to assign Timomachus to the period of the Diadochi.[†] But there is no longer any need to doubt Pliny's accuracy, for the "Medea" of Timomachus contradicts everything that we know about that over-blown art.[‡]

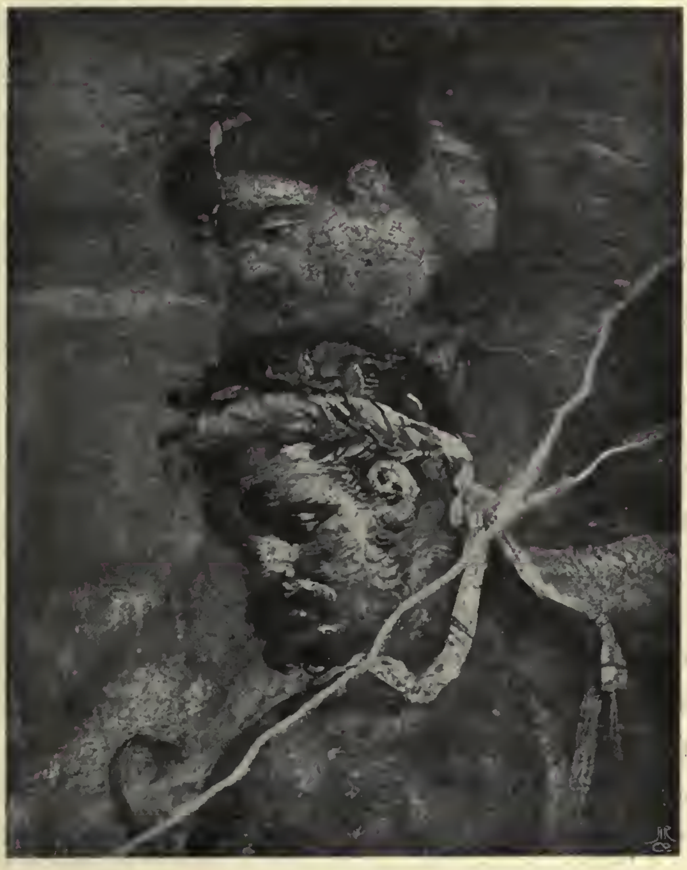

FIG. 58.—Detail from the "Finding of Telephus" (Museum of Naples)

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[*] Plinius, *Hist. Nat.* XXXV. 136.

[†] Welker, *Kleine Schriften* III., 457; H. Brunn, *loc. cit.*, II., 280.

[‡] Helbig (*Untersuchungen*, p. 159 f.) has disposed of apparent chronological difficulties.

Another composition, that of Perseus bringing Andromeda down from the rock,* even corresponds exactly with one of the so-called "Gala Reliefs," and affords a new piece of evidence that in the first century sculpture and painting pursued the same course (Fig. 57).

These pictures vary considerably in their treatment. The examples from Herculaneum, among them the "Medea" already mentioned,† but especially the four admirable pieces on a convex wall, one of which, the finding of the boy Telephus (Fig. 58),‡ still distinctly betrays a connection with the Pergamene Baroque, are all grandiosely realistic in execution. The fresco painter's broad brush-strokes and his certainty of hand recall the frescoes of Raphael's school of the period when Giulio or the Fattore still cultivated the conscientious naturalistic manner of the preceding period, while in the expression of form they already tried to attain a more superficial generality of execution. Another group,§ by its scanty and rather stiff composition, which is already entirely Augustan in character, and the delicious fluency of the execution, reminds us of those "Empire" painters who had acquired their technique in the Rococco period. Any one who has had an opportunity of looking at Fragonard's drawings must at once call them to mind when he sees these pictures. The "Actor dedicating a mask" ‖ is perhaps superior in certainty and lightness of touch to the best French water colours of the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. The pictures from Pompei most closely akin to these *genre* pieces fall below them in execution; even those most admirably pictorial in quality, as the "Woman playing the lyre," ¶ seem almost coarse when compared to them from the point of view of conception and design.

The Pompeian wall-pictures of the third and fourth style, however much they may vary among themselves, yet have this in common—

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* Helbig, *Wandgemälde*, No. 1186–1189.

† Helbig, *ib.* No. 1264.

‡ Helbig, *ib.* No. 1143. The others are Marsyas and Olympus, No. 226; Education of Achilles, No. 1291; Theseus, with the rescued children, No. 1214 [I give in Fig. 58 another and still more lovely example of the same subject; see *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1878, p. 89 and plate 67.—Ed.].

§ The *genre* pictures in Helbig, Nos. 1389b, 1435, 1460, 1462, are from Herculaneum or Stabiae.

‖ Helbig, No. 1460.

¶ Helbig, No. 1442.

that they are relatively on a much lower artistic level than the contemporaneous paintings of Rome and Herculaneum. The artists of the third style, though rich in invention and possessed by a praiseworthy anxiety to multiply and deepen the problems of landscape-painting, translate everything into so stiff and flat a manner that prototypes—originally perhaps well observed from Nature—appear in these imitations or adaptations as scarcely understood at all, till finally everything shrinks up into characterless Philistinism, so much so that a composition seriously planned like the "Judgment of Paris" might be taken, by a spectator not familiar with the stylistic conditions out of which the work arose, for a parody of the scene, for it looks exactly like a modern society piece.*

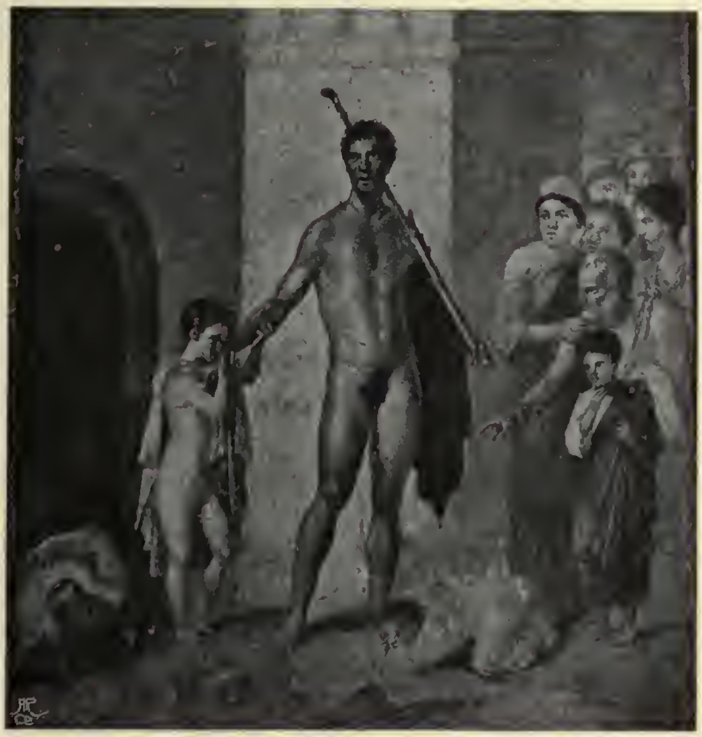

Fig. 59.—Theseus the Saviour; Pompeian painting (Photograph Alinari)

Wall-pictures of the fourth style, when compared with the pedantic sharpness of the third, have something watery and vague about them, so that the pregnant compositions threaten to dissolve in the treatment. As regards the composition of mythological subjects in Pompei, they rarely depart from the way marked out by Timomachus. It is true that the custom of choosing a ghastly subject and toning it down by the manner of the presentment was soon abandoned. Elegiac or else cheerful subjects, such as the "Ariadne Forsaken" or the "Aphrodite Fishing," which came into vogue at a later date, answered better than

* Helbig, No. 1286.

the "Medea" to the essential conditions of the style. But they never again excited so much admiration as this famous picture, which had attracted universal admiration precisely because of the contrast it offered to the preceding artistic tendency. All these Pompeian pictures, whether they still retain partial reminiscences of more animated compositions or whether circling once more within the limits imposed by pedantry, belong to a period of transition which we have already compared to the condition of art at the end of the eighteenth century. It was a period when, by attention to measure and reserve, artists hoped to attain—nay, even frequently did attain—to the dignity of an earlier art which had been more limited in its forms. For even in wall-paintings treated in the illusionist manner the mythological scenes do not look as if they were invented for this style, but seem to be taken over from the preceding Architectural style. The occasional appearance of purely Roman subjects not differing in composition from the other pictures shows that these pictures were borrowed from Rome, where they first came into notice, even if they were not all actually invented there.

The reason for the change lies simply in the fact that, precisely as in sculpture, artists from the beginning of the first century A.D. onwards almost ceased to invent mythological compositions, because, as in sculpture, the new illusionist style which was then forming concerned itself much less with variety of subject than with variety in treatment. In painting, therefore, as in sculpture, mythological subjects are thrown into the shade—in fact, figure painting as a whole takes a secondary place beside the ingenious novelty of the architectural framework of the decoration. On the walls, which afford the most brilliant example of the illusionist manner, the framed scenes with figures are either left out altogether or much reduced and partly replaced by small flying figures and groups (Fig. 60). Girls, boy satyrs, centaurs, either single or intertwined, adorn the centre of the wall-divisions, and in the treatment of these figures illusionism prepares a new system of pictorial representation. This manner could only be transitory, because it was not applicable everywhere, but it certainly helped to bring about the complete triumph of illusionism in the representation of figures also.

We have seen that for a period of about three centuries the common token of all ancient paintings and coloured statues was "plein air" painting, and consequent upon it the use of delicate, light, broken local tints. But in the figures just discussed we meet with another system of lighting, and, consequently, with a different selection of colour, and both clearly indicate an attempt to gain illusionist effects. The impression aroused is as if these figures were hovering in an atmosphere less brightly lit up than the wall upon which they are painted, and in front of which they appear to float. The lighting is still further complicated by the assumption of an opening in the middle of the ceiling, from which slanting rays strike downwards and touch the front surfaces and edges of the floating figures. This heightens the illusion that the figures are hovering in a dark part of the room, so that by slightly stippling the background round their outlines, especially round the extremities, the atmosphere between them and the wall is made visible with an astounding intelligence of artistic process. The flesh-parts and drapery are carried out in neutral tints which are warmed up against the deeper shadows and towards the lights mingle with dull shades of local colour which finally, at the points of highest illumination, flash out from the darkness as broad glimmering spots or sharp glancing edges. The relief of the group is no longer produced—or at least is not wholly

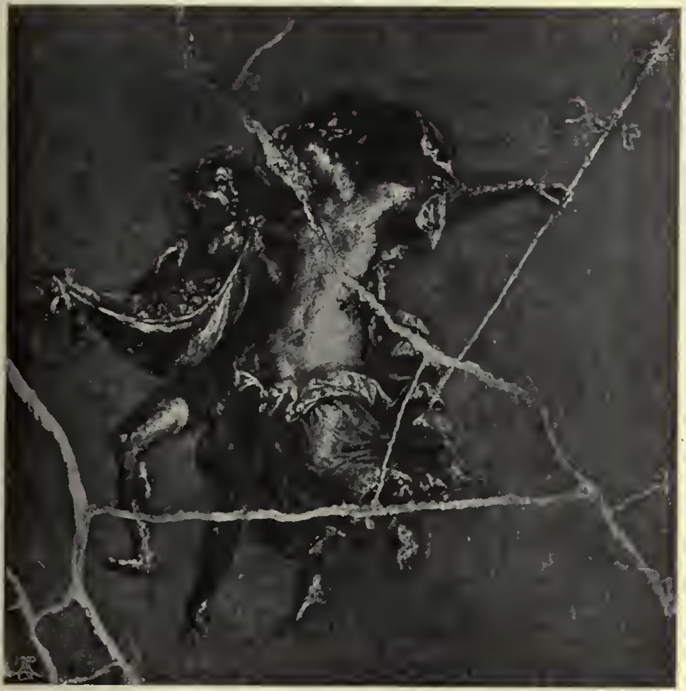

FIG. 60.—Pompeian Wall-painting in Naples (Photograph Alinari)

produced—by toned shading, but by coloured spots and strips scattered conspicuously, like a glittering rain, over the surface, and making all the shadowed parts recede; for the streak of light is strong enough to illumine the local colours at the raised parts, but not so strong as to overpower them by its brilliancy or modify their hues by its own. This is essentially the very procedure that Fortuny rediscovered in our own times at a similar period of transition from naturalism to illusionism. The modern artist, who in this case was far more important than his predecessors in antiquity, or at any rate than those who have left us samples of their art in Pompei, at once found many imitators, and yet his system has nowadays been surpassed and is almost forgotten, just as the system of the Pompeian painters seems to have possessed significance only for a short period of transition. In truth they were both only short-lived attempts at a solution, being destined soon to be superseded by genuine illusionism.

We have seen how in Rome the transition from naturalism to illusionism was much easier to trace in portraiture and in the representation of plant life than in reliefs crowded with figures. It may also be studied in a class of pictures which we have so far not discussed. These are the pictures of still life and of fragments of food, some of which are stowed away in modest corners of the Naples Museum, though a still greater part is perishing unprotected *in situ*. In order to represent the figure, artists drew from the inheritance of forms accumulated in the preceding hundred years, but these pictures betray at once, both in form and treatment, that they are contemporary with the rise of the illusionist decoration of the fourth style, and that they share all its audacious innovations. In the mosaic pavement, signed by Heracleitus in the Lateran,* which is still executed on the method introduced, we are told, by one Sosos of Pergamon, the separate fragments of fruit and of kitchen refuse are drawn straight from Nature and given individual relief, the shadows cast by each object are rendered, and the exact imitation of the local colours is everywhere taken into account. How entirely different are the Pompeian pictures of still life! Stone niches or shelves, of a yellowish grey, heightened in places by broken rays of light, give the ground tone for the whole picture; here, animals, fruits, foliage, plates, glasses, boxes, and so on are disposed with apparent carelessness so as to produce a pleasant yet simple variety in the lighting and to avoid too harsh a conflict of colours; thus also the modelling is effected almost solely by the light which is now absorbed, now thrown back, and now characteristically caught within an outline, by the variously rendered surfaces of the different objects, thus modifying the local colours till everything is skilfully made to contribute to the blonde harmony of the whole. The transparency of glass, the glossy skin of asparagus, the soft fur of the hare, the leathery surface of the pomegranate, the velvet of the peach, the silveriness of fish, the wet sleekness of the cuttle fish, are brought out by means of a few unconnected strokes and points dashed off by the brush in a scheme of middle tones which tend now to greenish, now again to brownish, and all with a truth to life and a depth of relief that make us doubt whether we should admire more the marvellous rendering of textures or the excellent unity of effect.* Any one with too small an experience of painting to estimate the broad gap that separates the unswept floor of the Lateran mosaic from these Pompeian pictures of still life should be discreet, and—even if he be insensible to all differences of time and style—should not try to persuade us that he holds all the prototypes for the one as for the other shut up in the same magic casket of Hellenism.

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* Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 694.

Not one of the painters in Pompei who executed these pictures was a great artist; they had only average talent and were obliged to work quickly and probably also cheaply. That art could inspire even mediocrities to such achievements is all the clearer proof of the height to which it had risen at the time. In the Macellum alone, where we already saw an example of the mastery of form attained by artists of the fourth style, small pictures are scattered about, each of which, in spite of its rapidity of execution, is a miracle of illusionist painting. Its panels, between which the views of streets and buildings with their light lilac tints remind one of the achievements of modern painting, are still decorated with pictures in the Augustan style, if the expression may be used here. These were assuredly copied from carefully selected works, for the Medea of Timomachus is among them. The basis of these walls is formed by a *scena*,* the sub-structure of which, with its simulated opening, is broadly treated in a manner recalling the foreground of modern impressionist pictures. Upon this podium are supports bearing small pictures, those models of illusionism already referred to. Over the deep blue of the southern sea galleys are gliding, represented by means of from two to three broken shades of the complementary colours of the water. When looked at from the right distance the two chief colours blend in the contours, the ships, &c., to a grey, which as it forms on our retina far surpasses in brilliancy the grey produced by the mixture of pigments. In the body of the ship, on the other hand, the yellow is intensified by the mass of surrounding blue, so that above the graduated tones of the yellow seems to lie another yellow which is the subjective complementary colour of the great bulk of the picture. This last yellow removes everything material in the colouring and produces an effect of mobility otherwise unattainable. By means of this retinal impression a vivacity is imparted to the picture which rivals the palpitating surface of the illuminated sea. For simple effect, produced by a few definite tones, these pictures can be compared only to the backgrounds of the portraits by Goya. That is a praise of antique painting which, if it be justified, nothing can surpass.

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* In the case of the picked examples in the Museum, the general impression, owing to the old varnish, tends too strongly to a yellowish green. The examples in Pompei have, however, generally retained their fine greyish yellow tonality.

Illusionism, then, first permeated painting and established itself firmly by representing the subjects which it specially affects whenever it appears, those namely of which the meaning is not likely to draw the spectator's attention away from technical execution or optical results. Then came a time when in historical art also illusionism was no longer merely tolerated as an intruder (in so far as the old compositions continued to be repeated with the help of its innovations) but when it created a new treatment of the figure to satisfy its own inner necessities.

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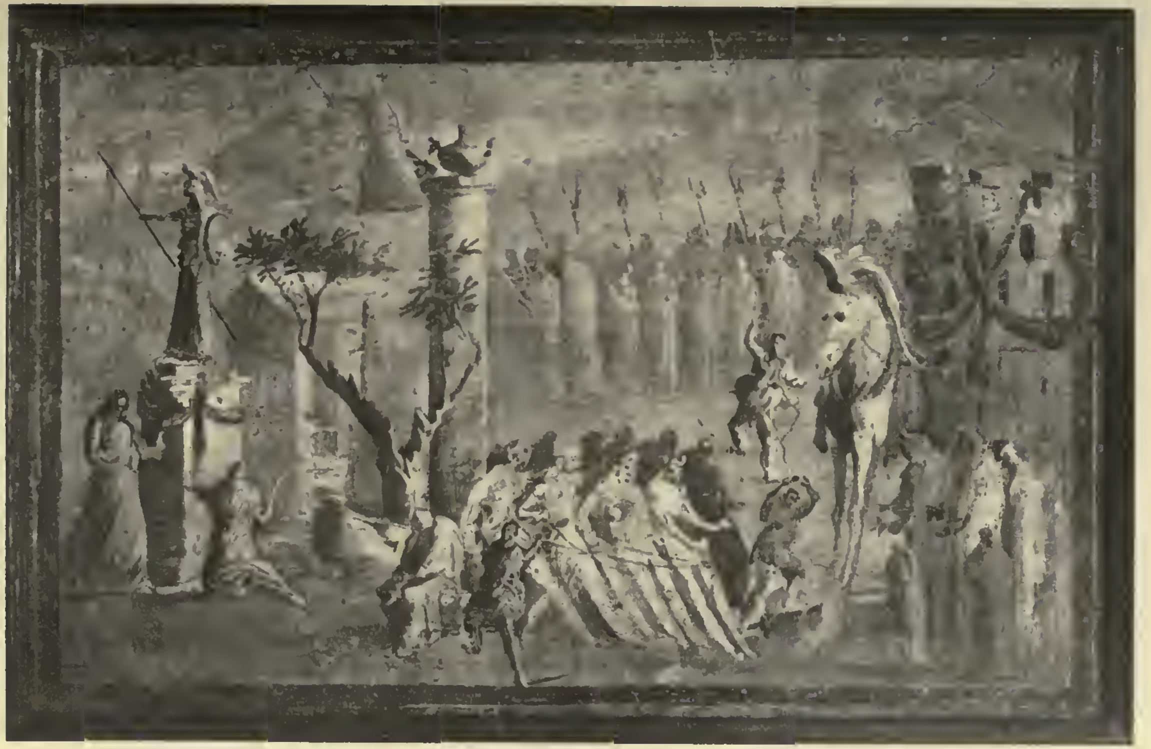
* *I.e.*, the basis resembles an antique *scena* or stage, on the lowest part of which the painter has imitated openings which admit a view of a complex of machinery, pulleys, and cords destined to drop the curtain. All this is painted, as noted above, in a thoroughly impressionist style.



THE TROJAN HORSE, POMPEIAN WALL-PAINTING.
(Naples.)

Plate XII.

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We pointed out as the essential character of illusionist painting that it demands of the spectator to transform and to concentrate into a spatial unity by means of his complementary experience, colour tones which are disconnectedly juxtaposed. The crudest instance is when the artist tries to show how on a moonlight night the surfaces illuminated by the moon broaden out brightly, while the deep shadows appear to grow blacker, and how in the transitions the forms fade away in the half-shadows. If the case is the crudest to observe it is at the same time the simplest to represent. We shall not then be surprised if that mythological scene, into which illusionism is, so to speak, not brought in from without, but is projected from its own inner necessities, turns out to be a moonlight scene. It is the "Wooden Horse of Troy," extant in three replicas, of which the best, in the Museum of Naples, is reproduced on Plate XII. It is significant that the simplest instance of historical illusionist painting in Pompei is at the same time the only one. This throws a light upon the chronological data of the process.

Artists had got no further up to the downfall of Pompei; probably the same was the case in Rome, whence, as the centre of all illusionist attempts, the model had been imported. When, accordingly, we come across historical compositions in this style which take place in the free light of day, where all the circumstances of representation are necessarily complicated, they should not be dated before the end of the first century B.C. There is still another characteristic to note in later methods: a new system of rendering colour, which aims not so much at producing brilliancy, but one in which chiaroscuro plays a leading part. In a certain sense the "plein air" method was surpassed. Antique illusionist painting as it progressed did not, like antique painting in its naturalistic period, apply itself to resolving the local colours in the light, but fused them, as in the fruit pieces, by means of a harmonising vapour, or else, as in the sea-pieces, imparted to them a stimulating effect by bold juxtaposition.

This moonlit landscape, then, marks a period when painting attempted, not without success, to represent faithfully atmospheric phenomena. We should treat Greek art with as much respect as the pots and pans of the Bushmen and the Hottentots, which we at any rate attempt to arrange chronologically in museums and in publications, and not indiscriminately bring in works of art and quotations from the poets taken from seven centuries, in order to realise how these things took place, and in what manner antique painting rendered the changes of the daylight or the manifold phases of the atmosphere. Poetry and art strive for the greater part, it is true, to attain similar ends, but they travel different ways; they employ different means of expression, so that practically they touch only at the start and at the close of the line of development, and after the most ancient poetry had personified the sun, the moon, the dawn, or had represented the scorching glow of a summer's day as the god sending forth his arrows, and the storm as the god hurling his thunderbolt, there yet intervenes a long time before formative art can discover the perfect art type of those personifications. Nor was the chronological relation of poetry and art closer at a later date, for while the poets of the period of the Diadochi describe starlight and the shimmer of the moon and the dancing of the sunbeams, the painters are still occupied in mastering with indescribable trouble the rounding and foreshortening of the figure; their efforts would have merely been hampered by a play of light upon the figure. In the then state of art, the painters of Alexander and their followers were incapable of rendering atmospheric effects with truth to Nature, and if they wanted to rival the poets they had perforce to find new methods of representation intermediate between the personifications of older art and the imitations of Nature introduced by the moderns. Here I may repeat that painting in the time of Apelles may fitly be compared, not as regards technical capability, but as regards method of expression, with mediæval glass paintings. But these paintings also display atmospheric fancies: now it is the appearance of saints in a glory of light, now again light clouds, and now the sun, and so on, which they represent, but in such a manner that all these phenomena are not rendered by effects recalling their real form and colour, but by ornamental images with definite contours, which, by their sensuously devised shapes, if I may use the expression. recall the memory pictures of those heavenly visions.

The representation of the sun as a yellow disc with a fringe of zigzags, of the moon as a crescent, of the stars as rosettes, is a subterfuge suggested by Nature herself, and it reappears among all peoples, without the help of a common art tradition. The Greeks also had already discovered them before the development of Greek art. They had further imagined a symbol for the storm, and transformed the thunderbolt with the zigzag of the lightning into a symmetrical *fascis*, which in the oldest sculpture and painting is given as an attribute to Zeus. One of the great inventions of the inventive Apelles seems connected with this ancient symbol. He made the storm into the subject of a picture, not by means of personifications alone, but by so transforming and enriching those ancient symbols of light that he caused his astonished contemporaries, whom those linear forms of flame put in mind of the appearance of storm, to exclaim that Apelles had indeed painted the unpaintable!* A vase-picture in Vienna, showing the chariot of the thunder in a circle of light travelling between lightning fasces (Fig. 61),† affords us, if not an example of the art of the Master,

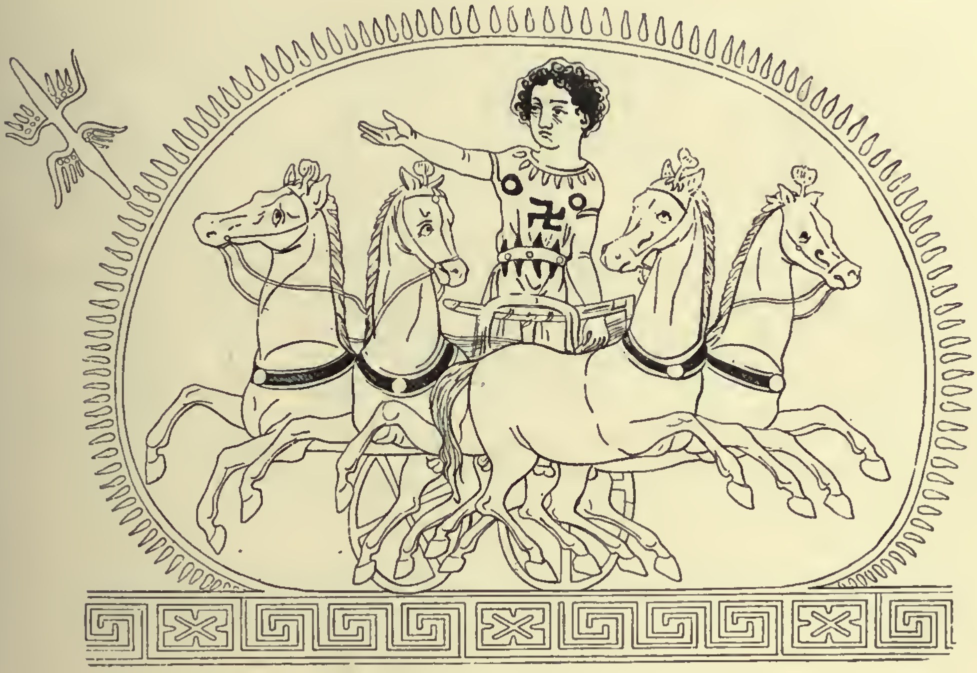

FIG. 61.—Vase Painting in Vienna.

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* Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* XXXV. 96.

† After *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1848, pl. XX.

at any rate a fair conception of the nature of his creation. Again, to take one instance out of many, we see on a vase-picture representing the madness of Lycurgus, *Lyssa*, the impersonation of the terrible glare of the sun, which drives men to madness, as she swoops down (Fig. 62)* with the goad in her right hand and snakes in her left, spreading wide her wings in a flaring halo of light. Now the masterly execution of this picture points either to a great contemporary original of the third century, or else forces us to assume that the painters of the Lower Italy vases themselves invented the light-symbolism which belongs to the most glorious creations of Greek art. † Naturally the vases with their monochromatic limitations cannot reproduce the full magic of their models, which still fell within the period of variegated colouring, and could thus by their lively tints perfect the impression of this play of flames. Inventions of an ornamental character like these, which creep in among the figures or float above them, could be displayed to best advantage on a surface on which the picture was not composed as a spatial unity. When perfect concentration in space in the rendering either of a landscape or the interior of a building had been attained, the representation of such figures was perforce handicapped, and when a diffused light made its way into the picture they were totally suppressed, for the resolution of outlines by light entirely destroyed precisely that play of form which had arisen from giving a linear outline to light. That is why we meet these shapes everywhere

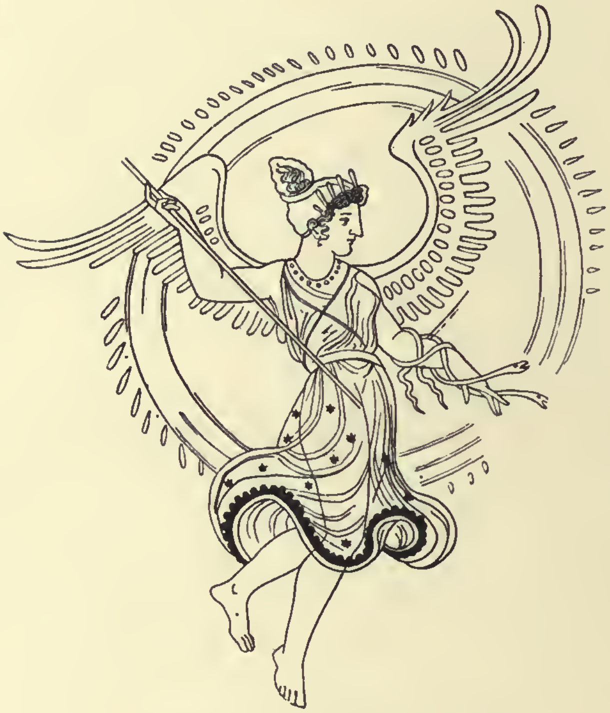

FIG. 62.—Lyssa on a Greek Vase-Painting

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* After *Monumenti*, V. pl. XXIII. British Museum Cat. F. 271.

† For other instances, see Helbig, *Untersuchungen*, p. 212.

on the Lower Italy vases which represent *Painting after Apelles*, but almost never or else changed beyond recognition on the Pompeian pictures, which represent *Painting after Timomachus;* and we should look for them in vain on pictures of the second century if any important instances of *Painting after Hippeus* were preserved to us. It was when the naturalistic painting in "plein air" was again thrown into the background by the new principles of illusionism that a novel mode of representing atmospheric phenomena sets in, which no longer attained its effect of illusion by transforming memory pictures but by giving shape to natural phenomena. Obviously, however, it was still only landscapes that could be the subject of such pictures, or scenes in which the element of landscape prevailed, since the truthful rendering of the atmosphere within a closed space, where it is modified by manifold nuances and tones, remained an impossibility to ancient painting for the reason that it never attained to the rendering of reflexions. It is true that in Pompeian pictures we find one definite instance of reflected light observed and represented, namely, reflexion in water, in the mirror itself, and reflexion of the atmosphere in the brilliant surface of glass; but in these cases the colour of the reflected does not break that of the reflecting object, but the colour of the mirror, be it water, metal, or glass, disappears entirely and is replaced by the reflected image in its own local colouring. The unimportant modifications effected by the colours of the reflecting object were thus neglected. Those innumerable slight alterations of colour brought about as the light is thrown back from one coloured object upon another—a process upon which the whole of modern painting depends, in so far as it is not in "plein air," when as a fact light absorbs all reflexions—were ignored, and only one very obvious case of coloured reflexion was represented, namely, reddening through the glow of fire. When, indeed, naturalistic imitation had once been attempted, the effect was one that could not have escaped even the most ordinary observation; it had been introduced by Antiphilus,* about the time that naturalistic attempts made their first appearance, and found few imitators. The lack of observation of coloured reflexions, then, and the uncertain experiments in linear perspective which could not be comprehended within any precise rules, are what separates antique from modern painting and what, for the most part, even when the technique is most developed, makes them appear to the eye accustomed to modern painting as the work of mere *dilettanti*, although every other essential condition of perfect pictorial conception and technique had been discovered by the ancients and generally employed with the greatest skill.

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* Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* XXXV., 138.

These preliminary considerations make it impossible to refer back to Hellenistic models the set of landscapes with the adventures of Odysseus found on the Esquiline and now preserved in the Library of the Vatican,* for these pictures are illusionist in treatment, true to nature in the observation of atmospheric effects, and furnished with scenes in the continuous method. We must admit that they are the logical outcome of an art tendency of which the oldest example is the "Trojan Horse" from Pompei, to which they are related in the same measure as the nearly contemporary reliefs of the Column of Trajan to those of the Arch of Titus. Because Vitruvius states that in the first century also, walls were decorated with the adventures of Odysseus, the pictures have been referred to his period or even to an earlier date. The needlessness of this assumption need not be pointed out. The manner in which Homeric scenes were painted in the time of Timomachus is well exemplified by the pictures from the temple of Venus in Pompei with their stiff doll-like figures.†

The garden in which Circe first receives and then tends the wanderers is reproduced here in outline (Fig. 63). It recalls how the continuous method of representation becomes an integral part of illusionist landscape pictures. Now in the case of the Trajanic sculptures we were able to observe the same dovetailing, so to speak, of the two devices, and to realise how the continuous method of narration arose as a flower of Roman Imperial art. Because we discover that illusionism at last interpenetrated the treatment of Greek subjects also, we need not therefore doubt that its root and its growth were entirely Roman, or that it came to its perfect maturity in the Roman art of the first century B.C.; nor because we find the continuous

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* Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 956.

† Helbig, *Wandgemälde*, 1306, 1324, 1325.

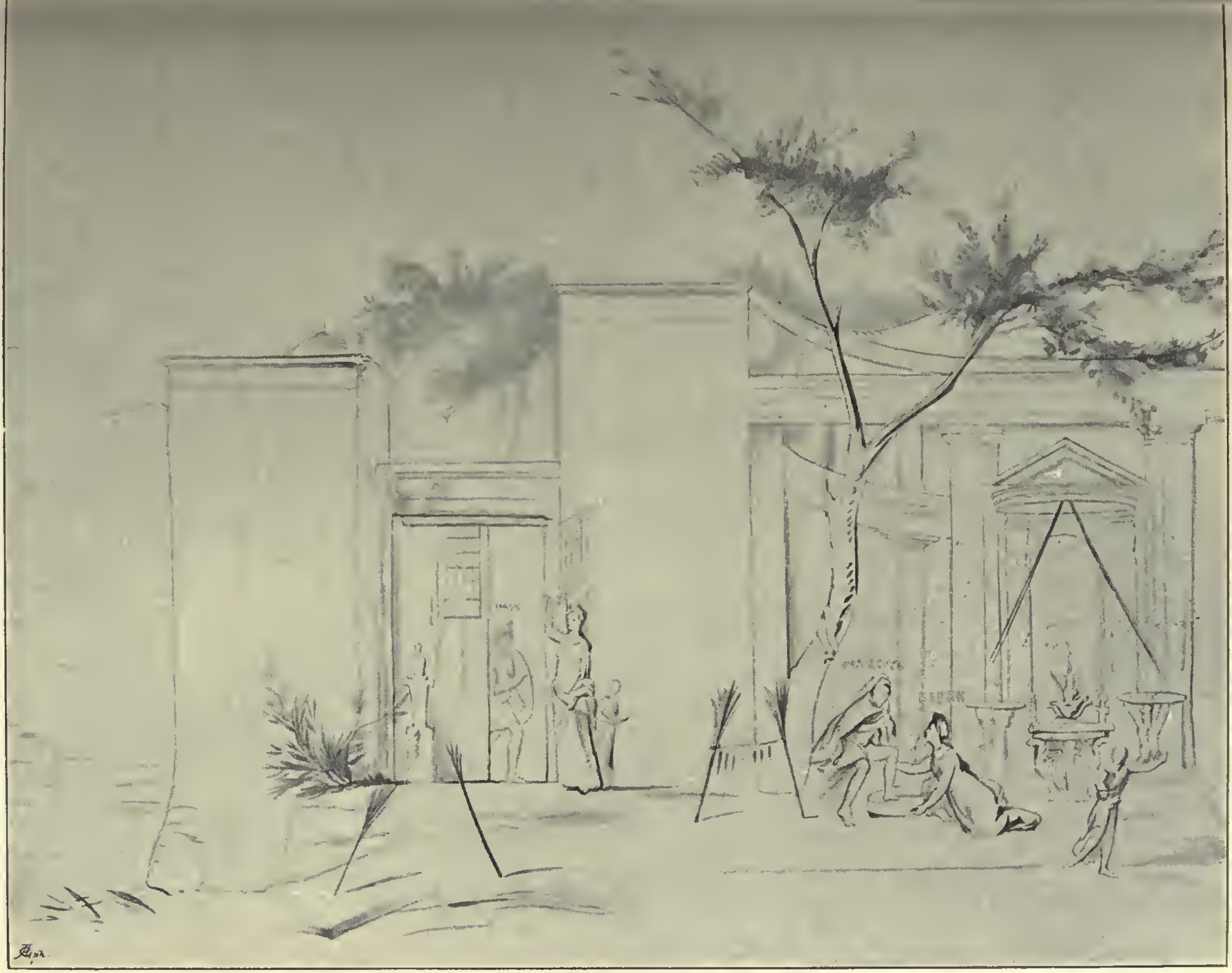

FIG. 63.—"The Garden of Circe." Roman Painting (Library of the Vatican)

method of narration constantly associated with illusionism need we conclude that it also took root at the same time or grew up with it. What is important to us is that, whatever the origins of the continuous narrative method may be, it combined with illusionism and became the Roman Imperial art, for it is owing to this circumstance alone that this method of narration could reign supreme for fifteen hundred years.

In its origin it is not exclusively Roman. We found it making its appearance as a derivative of the complementary narrative method in old Asiatic art. We also saw how the juxtaposition of the exploits of a hero in various periods of Greek art led to similar *schemata*, and we can also trace it in individual instances in the painting of the age of the Diadochi, first on the vases and then in the following period on the Pompeian pictures. These instances are instructive as regards its origin, because they show us how Greek art, in adapting itself to its manifold tasks, was bound in certain cases to light on methods of representation which were otherwise excluded by its laws; they prove, however, at the same time, that Greek art in its careful choice of forms, even when it admitted what was foreign to itself, always understood how to limit it. It is tolerably indifferent whether a motive or a style was discovered in the period of its predominance, or whether it was borrowed from an older art where it had made a sporadic appearance, for a method of representation only becomes truly alive when objects must take form according to its principles.

The transgression of Actæon, who watched the goddess bathing, and his consequent summary punishment, was the given subject. In a landscape the naked Artemis cowers by the side of a brook and notices with terror that Actæon is watching her from behind a little temple placed in the midst. He is then immediately represented again at the back as he tries to keep off the dogs which are springing upon him, incited to the attack by the goddess, who is herself represented a second time.* In another composition of the scene Artemis appears once only between the peeping and the punished Actæon, who is turning into a stag.† And it is precisely in a scene of transformation that we already meet upon vase-paintings with an analogous artistic method. On those vase-pictures which represent the struggle of Peleus with Thetis throughout her numerous transformations, Peleus appears once only wrestling with all the beasts whose form the sea-nymph assumed consecutively.

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* Helbig, *loc. cit.* No. 252.

† Helbig, *loc. cit.* No. 249b.

A picture from the last period of Pompei affords another instance: Bellerophon has returned from his battle with the Chimaera; he stands before the queen relating his exploit, and behind, upon a hill in the distance, we see him mounted upon his winged steed attacking the monster.* Here, as a fact, the contents of the hero's narrative is fashioned into a visible unity, but yet the method is continuous in so far as the battle on the mountain, and, following upon it, the narrative of the hero on his return, are represented in the same landscape within one frame. Since the *continuous* treatment was known to mythological landscape-painting, even though it may only have been employed in isolated instances, for special reasons, it might have been borrowed thence for the Odyssey landscapes. On the other hand, the reading of the Homeric poems in schools had long since led to the illustration of isolated scenes, and on the so-called Homeric cups of the third century B.C., as well as on the *Tabula Iliaca*,† we find the isolated consecutive scenes carelessly juxtaposed without divisions. As already hinted, this was merely the result of pedagogic carelessness, intent only upon the scenes themselves, and not upon keeping them artistically rounded off, not to speak of any attempt at the production of a continuous work of art. But this process facilitated the introduction of this style at a time when, as towards the close of the first century, it came to correspond to the necessities of the age, since, in order to produce works in the continuous style, it was sufficient to place school pictures of this kind within a connected landscape.

It may be objected that Petronius, who saw the commencement of this change, and Pliny, who almost beheld its completion, have nothing to say about it, but can only lament the decay of painting in their day. But was it not, perhaps, those same radical changes which seemed to them the downfall of art, because the older manner which they prized as connoisseurs was thereby done away with? In the history of modern painting we have a similar instance. Vasari, who saw the rise of Tintoretto, who witnessed his methods which were to transform the whole technique of painting, and could survey a great part of his achievement, what does he tell us about Tintoretto? This: that "he was a good musician, but that, as regards painting, he was extravagant, capricious, rapid, and obstinate, with the most *terrible* brain (*il più terribile cervello*) that ever yet belonged to a painter, as one may gather from the fantastic composition of his stories, which are different from the usage of other painters; things planned with the greatest trouble *he not unfrequently left as sketches, so that one could see the separate strokes of the brush*, applied casually, and with a certain wild power, rather than dictated by judgment and design. He painted everything, frescoes, oil-paintings, portraits from nature, and at every price, so that he has painted, and paints still, the greater part of the pictures in Venice after his own fashion. Seeing that in his youth he painted with care, like those *who followed the grand manner of their predecessors*, and, had he not, as he did, abandoned the usual method, he might have been one of the greatest painters of Venice." *

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* Sogliani, *Pitture murali di Pompei*, No. 521; reproduced *Giornale degli Scavi di Pompei*, II. p. 107, Tav. IV.

† Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 454.

It is true that we know nothing of the further development of this continuous method of narration in painting in the second century A.D.; but we cannot deny it for painting since we can observe it in sculpture on sarcophagi of the second century, and, moreover, since the pictures of Philostratus, from the beginning of the third century, give us descriptions of advanced examples of that style of art. The pictures of Philostratus are connected, as regards subject and treatment, not with the older of the extant works of antique art, but with the latest. There we still find those reflected images which had already delighted the Pompeian painters, but so perfected as to enable us to assume the further development of painting. There are effects of lighting, and night pieces which do not assuredly touch the creations of modern art in this direction, but which show clearly how the methods first essayed in the "Trojan Horse" had been elaborated. And extant pictures, also, afford the proof that, up to the third century, both pictorial conception and technique did not move backwards, but forwards.

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* Vasari, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, VI. p. 587 f.

The description of the picture of "Ariadne" in Philostratus (i. 15) recalls a most favourite Pompeian subject (Fig. 64), and proves how, in the course of two hundred years, in spite of continual repetition, the subject still suggested new possibilities to the painter, just as in modern times Rubens, for example, delighted in handling the themes of Titian.

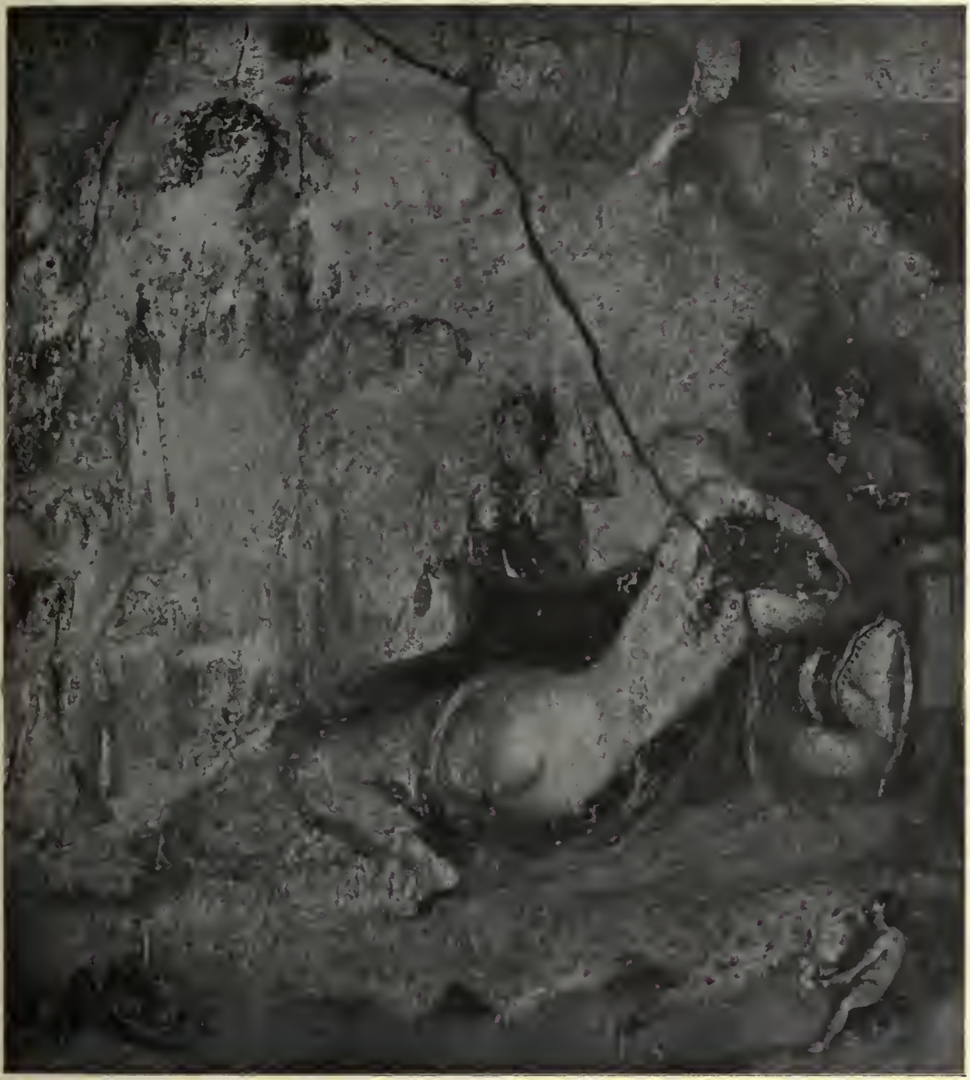

FIG. 64—Dionysus and Ariadne. Wall Painting in the "Casa Nuova"
(By permission of Messrs. G. Brogi)

The "Olympus" (i. 21) and the "Narcissus" (i. 23), boys gazing at their reflexions in the water would, were the pictures preserved to us, probably afford the best proof of the development of illusionist painting, because we already find similar subjects in Pompei, and the progress in treatment would at once become clear. How great this was, and what painting could still effect at the beginning of the third century A.D., is proved by the frescoes from the Baths of Constantine (Plate XIII.), of which the fragments are preserved in the Palazzo Rospigliosi.* The delicate strokes of the brush in these decorative monochromes recall Watteau, and not the feathery treatment alone, but the peculiar grace, shows that Roman art also had its *Rococco.* If these fragments have carried us beyond Philostratus, on the other hand the portraits found in Egypt, and brought by Flinders-Petrie to London,† and by Theodor Graf to Vienna,‡ are faithful witnesses to the state of painting at the time when those descriptions were written.§ They point to a con-

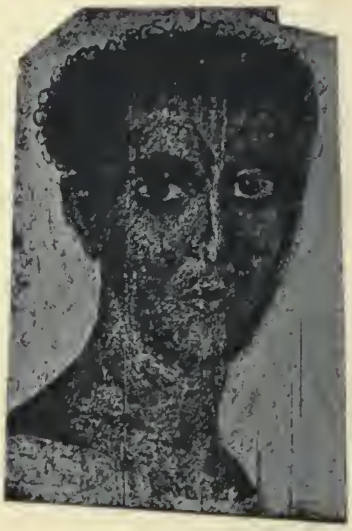

FIG. 65.—Head from the Fayoum
(Catal. Graf, No. 69)

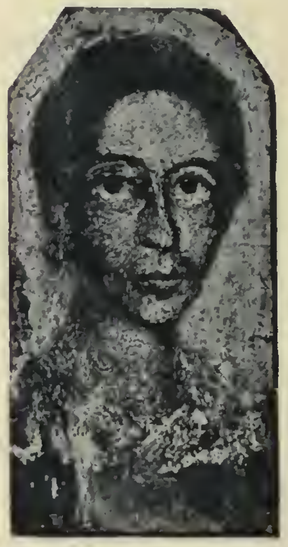

FIG. 66.—Head from the Fayoum
(Catal. Graf, No. 78)

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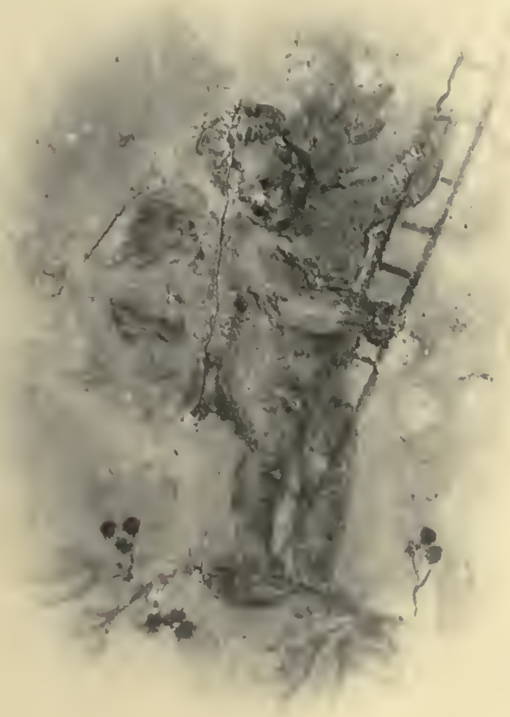
* Old engravings in *A Treatise of Ancient Painting*, by George Turnbull, London, 1740, plates 31, 32, 35–37, 41–43, 46, 47. Our plate is after a photograph by Lucchetti.

† Flinders-Petrie: *Hawara.*

‡ *Antike Porträts aus hellenistischer Zeit im Verlage von Th. Graf in Wien* [our Figs 65 and 66 are taken from this illustrated catalogue, by the owner's permission.—ED.].

§ Folnesics has shown in the *Mittheilungen des österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Wissenschaft* (February 1894) that the gold ornaments worn by the women in these portraits



PUTTO, ROMAN PAINTING.

(Casino Rospigliosi.)

Plate XIII.

LIBRARY
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OF
CALIFORNIA

siderable progress as against the examples from the first century, and the manner especially in which, in the best of these, light is introduced into the masses of the hair by means of dull spots, shows how nearly in this case antique art had attained to the most significant achievements of modern painting. They are at the same time the best proof of the retrograde movement of Roman art, for these portraits are born of the same spirit as the boldest among the Roman busts of which they are the true pendants. But in them the illusionist style stimulated by Rome conquers the East. We learn from them how the stimulus imparted by Rome in the first century A.D. had brought to maturity an Imperial Art with which the true Hellenic East, and the East already Hellenised of old, would long have been unable to effect a connection.

The severely practical spirit of the Romans had, at a time when Greek art was still representing cities and landscapes in a grand symbolic manner, already preferred simple representations of the localities. This, at any rate, is what we are told of the pictures which were carried in the year 174 B.C. in the triumph of Sempronius Gracchus,* and the column of Trajan proves that this custom persisted and acted, so to speak, as a lever to bring the illusionist style to the surface of artistic activity. On this monument the geographical details are still subordinated to the noble unity of effect; but on the column of Marcus Aurelius, where pictorial relief is pushed still further in details, they interrupt the various compositions. Perspective correctness was, in this case, made to give way to accuracy in the rendering of river courses, encampments, and so on. We can already detect that tendency to mapping out locality which appears fully elaborated in the battle scenes of the arch of Septimius Severus. In the period of Marcus Aurelius the "portrait" of localities seems to have been also introduced into easel pictures and State reliefs, although, where the artistic intention was foremost, one could not go so far as in actual historical representations, but the personifications and allegories which

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belong to the age of Septimius Severus. The identical method of drawing, above all the identical treatment of light and shade in all these pictures, prove that they belong not to different times, but that they were all executed within a relatively short period.

* Livy, XLI. 28; *cf.* the excellent discussion of Roman triumphal pictures in Raoul-Rochette, *Peintures antiques inédites*, Paris, 1836, pp. 303–314.

here served to the precise indication of place were retained. I shall remind the reader in this connection of the great relief with the "Apotheosis of Faustina" in the Palazzo dei Conservatori,* and the beautiful fragments with the foundation of the Temple of Aesculapius on the Island of the Tiber (Fig. 67),† which is repeated on a medallion of Antoninus Pius.‡

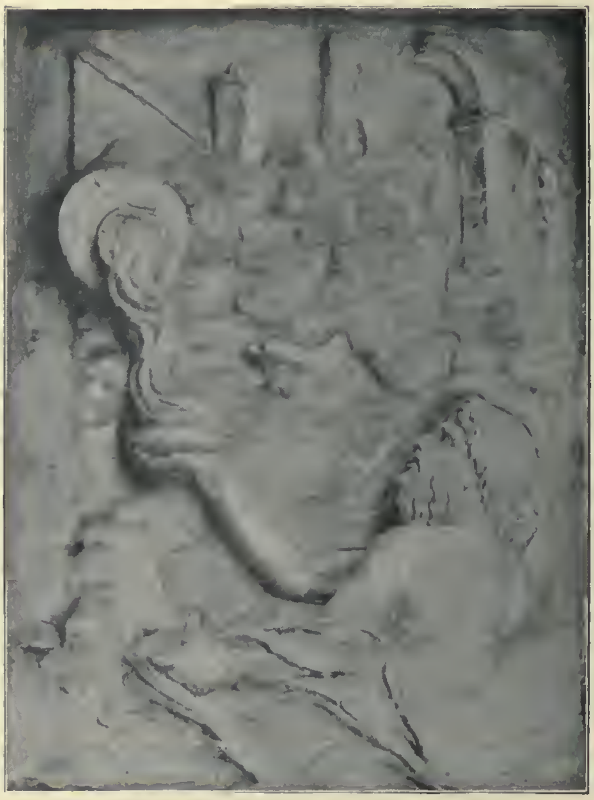

FIG. 67.—Allegorical Relief in Palazzo Rondanini (After *Röm. Mittheilungen*, I. pl. IX.)

The diffusion of similar landscape-pictures in the Greek East is attested by a medallion of Alexander Severus, representing the foundation of Ephesus (Fig. 68).§ The personification of Mount Pion, which if actually represented would have hidden the scene, reclines upon a rock in the foreground, holding Artemis Ephesia in the right hand and the horn of plenty in the left, while at the back the ominous boar flies transpierced by an arrow in order to expire on the spot where the Temple of Athena is to rise. A parallel representation which strikes us almost as a pendant or an imitation occurs in the Palaemon of Philostratus (ii. 16) with the group of the personified Isthmus and the personified bays in the foreground, and with Palaemon, who is borne forward by the Dolphin; only the succouring Poseidon and the people with the King offering sacrifice are additions, the like of which, if we can imagine the little coin picture enlarged into a big painting, would also, probably, be found in the scene of the "Founding of Ephesus." The picture of "Thessaly" is next in the sequence (ii. 14); the "Islands" (ii. 17) have already been recognised by Welcker as the Ligurian; and then comes the Glaucus (ii. 15), with the representation of the Bosphorus, which reappears in the "Fishermen" (i. 12, 13), all showing how, in the second and third century, the Roman preference for geographically accurate pictures had become Hellenised. The *Amores* (i. 6) and the "Meadows" (i. 9) find their best counterpart in the children at play upon Roman sarcophagi.

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* Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 546.

† Von Duhn, "Due Bassirilievi del Palazzo Rondanini," in *Römische Mittheilungen*, I. p. 166, pl. IX.-X.

‡ Fröhner, *Les Médaillons de l'Empire Romain*, pl. I.

§ F. Imhoof-Blumer, "Antike Münzbilder" in *Archäologisches Jahrbuch*, III. 1888, p. 294 f., pl. IX., No. 25.

FIG. 68.—Medallion of Alexander Severus (After *Arch. Jahrb.* III. pl. IX., 25)

We might also expect to find the continuous method of representation further developed in the pictures of Philostratus, considering the way in which they exhibit the progress of the other elements of Roman art. It is natural to imagine all that he describes embellished by illusionist effects. The numerous night and light pieces show how the problems first attempted in the "Trojan Horse" and the Odyssey landscapes were further solved. We will postpone the study of these pictures until it becomes necessary to examine the paintings in the Book of Genesis at Vienna as their continuation.

Now for the pictures of Philostratus in the continuous style. We find depicted in one picture Memnon lying dead upon the ground, and hovering above him his mother, imploring the night to descend that she may take away the body of her son, while close by we already see the colossos into which the Ethiopian hero was transformed, struck by the first rays of the sun (I. 7). Hence, not only is the story unfolded continuously, but the times of the day follow in their natural sequence. On another picture we have Pentheus being torn to pieces upon Cithaeron by the mad Bacchantes, and in uninterrupted sequence we see also how the dismembered limbs of the corpse are sorrowfully put together by the now sobered women. In the first scene Agave, the mother, was represented dragging her son, whom she mistakes for a lion, by the hair ; in the second she was seen, bespattered with his blood, not daring to touch the beloved body. The nurture of the boy Achilles by Cheiron forms the subject of a third picture (II. 2) : in the foreground the Centaur, who is represented half reclining, is rewarding the boy with fruits and honey for his skill in the chase ; in the background he appears initiating his pupil into horsemanship upon his own back. In a fourth picture one saw Heracles asleep, surprised by the Pygmies, who try to take him by storm with weapons of warfare, as if he were a citadel, and close by we see him laughingly tuck up the mannikins in his lion skin (II. 22). Side by side with mythological pieces a contemporary *genre* subject, "The Boar Hunt," was also to be seen (II. 28). First, within a spacious landscape the beginning of the hunt is represented, the flying boar, the huntsmen, and among them an ephebe who, surpassing all the rest by his beauty, forms the central point of the company, and in immediate sequence we see how this youth has slain the boar which had taken refuge in the fen, whilst his companions have halted on the margin. Finally, a picture, where the principal person at any rate reappears not once, but several times. This is the "Birth of Hermes" (I. 26). First one saw the Hours tending the newborn child ; then how they turn to his mother Maia, as she lies in bed, while the little boy, represented a second time, drives the cattle of Apollo into a cavern of the earth ; now the little rogue is seen for a third time slipping back into his cradle ; then Apollo who comes to Maia to ask for his cattle ; upon this the boy is shown a fourth time, stealing the arrows from the god's back ; and, finally, Apollo is repeated again, compelled to laugh at this new theft.

The reality of the pictures of Philostratus has been denied, because he describes them with tags from the old poets, and yet at the same time the scenes on sarcophagi which are contemporary with those descriptions, have been with the greatest acuteness explained by the words of the same old poets, so that at bottom, allowance being made for the flowery language of the rhetor on the one hand, and the jolting style interspersed with quotations of the *Annali* on the other, the two coincide quite exactly. The evident conclusion to draw was that descriptions of pictures of the same period, and produced under similar circumstances, if they include every essential point, must perforce resemble one another, and that this marvellous coincidence between the modern descriptions of sarcophagi and the *periegesis* of Philostratus was a clear proof that both pictures and sarcophagi belong to the same period. On the contrary, however, the models of both were looked for far and wide, in disconnected periods of Greek art, and in places, moreover, that were furthest removed from both and from one another. In the earlier periods of antiquity poetry and art work independently and creatively upon mythical material, now the one, now the other, inventing new motives. But in the third century of our era mythology had long lost all power of further development, so that artists following in the learned track common to the whole period kept to the narratives of the most celebrated poets, which they sought to reproduce as faithfully as possible in their works. Thus the works of art of the second and third centuries A.D. follow much more literally the works of Homer or of Pindar, of Aeschylus or of Euripides, than did the works contemporary with those poets which treated of the same matter. It was only thanks to the continuous method of representation, that this pedantic proceeding became endowed with a wealth of fancy which makes the works of that time appear so living in comparison with the illustrations of our modern books.

In the "Birth of Hermes," described by Philostratus, it is surprising to find that the scenes cannot be divided according to the figures, in such a manner that the first scene should close upon this figure, or the next one begin with that; but there is a looking backwards and forwards from one scene into the other, and an intercommunication between them which makes it appear as if a figure was observing, discussing, and laughing at what was going on in the next scene, or even, like Apollo at the close, was looking back upon the preceding representation of himself. It would be impossible to gain any correct conception of a pictorial method in which the *continuous* principle is, so to speak, raised at once to a higher power, were not the sarcophagi there to help us. Of course, a description of sarcophagi, which neatly divides the scenes according to numbers and presents them in this order, copied out from a number of isolated old pictures, notices nothing of all this. We have, for example, the sarcophagus at St. Petersburg with the "Murder of Aegisthus."[*] In the middle, on a throne, sits the king, seeking to ward off Orestes as he presses forward sword in hand, whilst a maiden who is coming to the help of the king brandishes a stool at the murderer. But Orestes has accomplished the murder, escaped the blow, and is represented again on the right seizing his mother by the hair, while the old nurse, holding him back by head and shoulders, strives to prevent the matricidal act. At the same time, however, she turns her head round and looks in terror towards the first scene where her foster-child Orestes is threatened by the blow from the stool. Or look at the sarcophagus Giustiniani with the same subject.[†] In the middle stands Orestes, victorious; to the left lies the dead

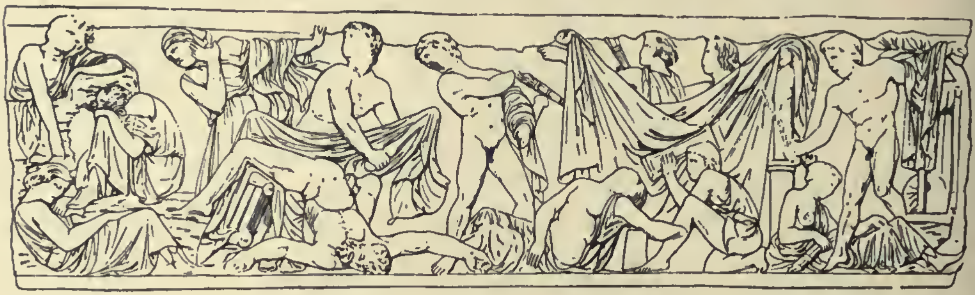

FIG. 69.—The Vengeance of Orestes, on the Sarcophagus Giustiniani

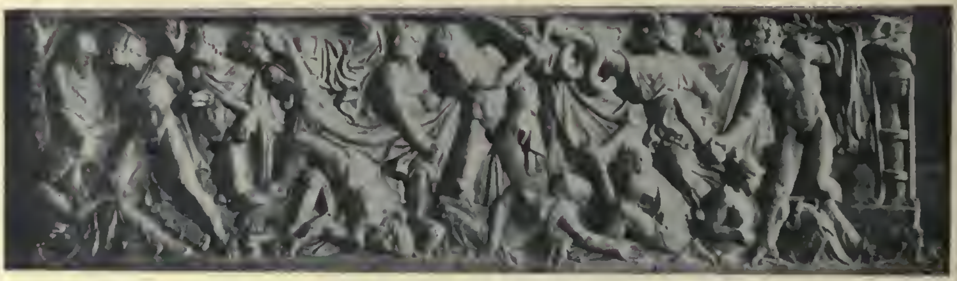

FIG. 70.—Sarcophagus in the Lateran (Photograph Alinari)

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[*] C. Robert, *Antike Sarkophagreliefs*, II., p. 166 f.

[†] C. Robert, *loc. cit.* pl. LV. (p. 156), after which our Fig. 69. [I have added as a variant example of the same scene the sarcophagus in the Lateran, Helbig, *Collections in Rome*, 682.—ED.]

Aegisthus, fallen from his seat; to the right the corpse of Clytemnestra. And whilst the troubled nurse looks out towards the funeral mound of the father, to see whether the Furies are sleeping still, and sees them lying quietly there, the same Furies are already striding forward from the left towards the unconscious Orestes, who, still full of his own rage, sword in hand, considers the cloak which Pylades has lifted from the seat of Aegisthus. There are, however, only two Furies; the third is sleeping in the Temple of Delphi, where Orestes, now assured of deliverance, appears once again, stealthily stepping over her as he makes for the place of atonement. Thus the triad is represented twice: once on the spot where they had incited the murder, and again, divided, threatening vengeance and when atonement is at hand. In the middle, where the murder is represented, the chamber is hung with draperies; but the glance travels without to the court containing the tomb on the left, and to the cella of the temple on the right. It is a continuous picture in which the scene is fantastically enriched by the manifold relations of the figures to one another. In its present colourless condition, this Giustiniani sarcophagus has great pictorial charm; how greatly must this have been increased when painters possessing as much skill and certainty of effect as the painters of the contemporary Egyptian portraits, finished such a relief in colour, and when, by the distribution of the tints, the connections were emphasised and the divisions intensified! This sort of playful anachronism must be unpleasing to dry common sense; but no art was created by Philistines for Philistines, and the freedom which art allowed itself at all times won for it also at all times first the approval of receptive contemporaries; so Philostratus admiringly describes that method of handling the mythological pictures, calling special attention to the skilful solution of the problem in specially noteworthy cases, and only not mentioning it in others because they were of every-day occurrence.

The oldest mosaics also lead us to remember Philostratus once more, even when they already adorn Christian monuments.

A pictorial work has been preserved in which the plastically compressed scenes with Cupids on the sarcophagi are gaily dispersed throughout the landscape as in the "Love-gods" and the "Meadows" of Philostratus. Let us call the picture

"The Fishponds."

We are at the source of a river. But seeing that three river-gods are represented, the painter seeks to indicate the flowing together of several sources. The middle one is the strongest; here the river-god reclines on a mighty urn, which appears to float like a barrel on the water that issues from it. Presently he will sound his shell horn joyfully, because it gladdens him to see how the waters spread themselves evenly between the flowery meadows. From right and left come boyish youths with urns, from which flow lesser streamlets which still add something to the abundance of the main source. But look now, what a fishery! The whole river-region has been apportioned by the Love-gods among themselves, and they have divided the upper reach into ponds, by driving rows of pales into the river bed. But the picture also shows us how they have driven the fish inside. Fish catchers are set with small openings at the top, where at the angles some of the enclosures are broken. Now, if the fish swimming up stream get into the corner, they easily slip through that small opening, which they cannot find again when they let themselves be carried down stream. They then glide down along the sides of the angles and find themselves caught in the corners of the traps adjoining the shore. Thus the Love-gods have caught the whole race of fish in their reservoirs. They have also got water-fowl, which the little fellows are teasing. One of them flies swimming in front of three ducks; another has seized a swan by the wings and lets himself be drawn by the bird through the water; a third has fixed a sail in an empty amphora; standing upon the jar, and emulating the swiftness of the water-birds, he is carried up stream by the swollen sail. Bravely must the rogues have caroused till the great wine jar was empty; they must certainly have eaten fried fish with their liquor, for fish causes thirst. The oldest urchins take no part in these frolics; they are preparing for fresh feasts. Don't you see them everywhere taking the fish from the traps? One sits upon a piece of rock and angles, two

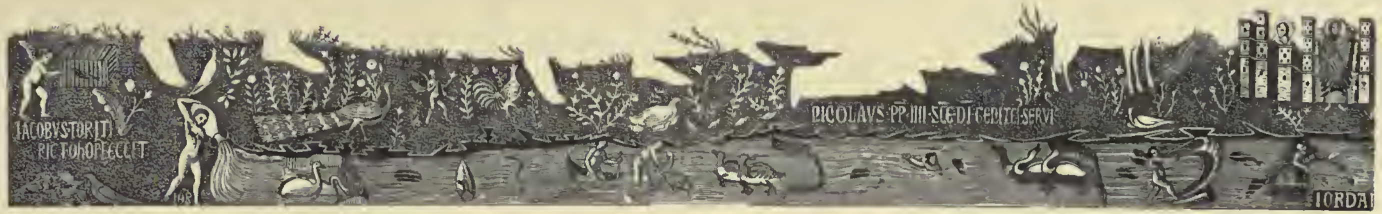
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FIG. 71.—Mosaic from the apse of Saint John Lateran

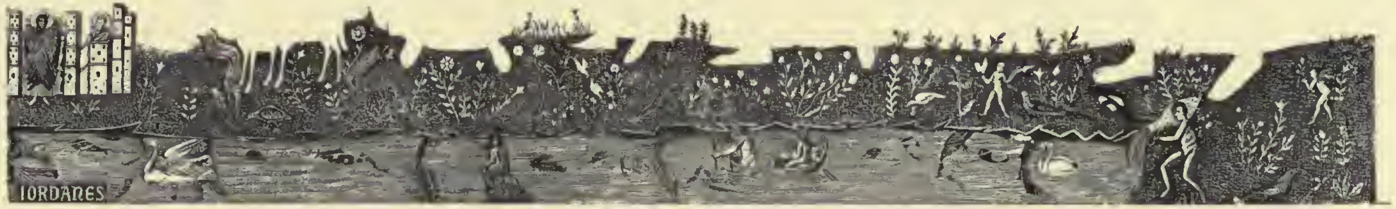

FIG. 72.—Mosaic from the apse of Saint John Lateran

others are in a boat; one rows while the other, standing in the bows, harpoons the scurrying water-fry below. From a second boat others again are setting traps of wickerwork. I think they are after eels, like the one we see there wriggling through the water. When the eels, tempted by the bait, have once slipped into these wicker catchers they cannot get out again, because the pots are shaped like amphoras, and the ends of the rushes of which they are made stick out into the narrow neck. The rushes easily bend to let something in, but they shut the door when it comes to getting out again; as the poet says:

> "In affairs, like a net, man is easily caught,
> But the way of escape must be painfully bought."

So then, we won't meddle with affairs. However, the Loves are after birds as well. A hen is calling her chickens over the meadow, doves coo, and a peacock struts about, while another is being fed by one of the boys. Of the ducks we have already spoken. But some of the little birds, too, that hop about among the flowers would make a capital roast; in fact, one of the featherlings is dragging a cage along with a decoy bird in it; he'll soon catch them, and then won't there be a feast! But if the urchins bid us to dine we won't ask what that golden city in the middle means, with its walls all glittering with precious stones, or who he is that stands in front covered with wings; for it were not seemly to speak of such matters with the Loves.

Among all the works of art that have come down to us, none is so near to the pictures of Philostratus as this frieze which runs round the edge of the mosaic in the apsis of San Giovanni in Laterano (Figs. 71 and 72).* It was executed by Jacopo Toriti at the bidding of Pope Nicolas IV., and Eugène Müntz, without noticing the connection with Philostratus, has already recognised that this was a mosaic picture of the fourth century—the date of the first building of the church—which had been merely copied and partly interpolated by the mediæval artist. A similar strip of mosaic, of similar origin, may also be seen in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, and there exist drawings of the mosaics of the cupola of Santa Costanza, which also date from the fourth century, where like motives are displayed.*

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* Drawn by Hans Macht after photographs of the separate parts executed for the purpose by Lucchetti of Rome.

When we come upon such a counterpart to the pictures of Philostratus used up as independent ornament in a Christian church, we may expect to find that the oldest works of art representing Christian subjects are linked by their treatment to those pictures or to the contemporary sarcophagi and reliefs commemorating Roman State acts.

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* E. Müntz, "Notes sur les mosaïques chrétiennes de l'Italie VI.," *Revue Archéologique*, Nouvelle Série, Vol. XXXVI., 1878, p. 272 ff.

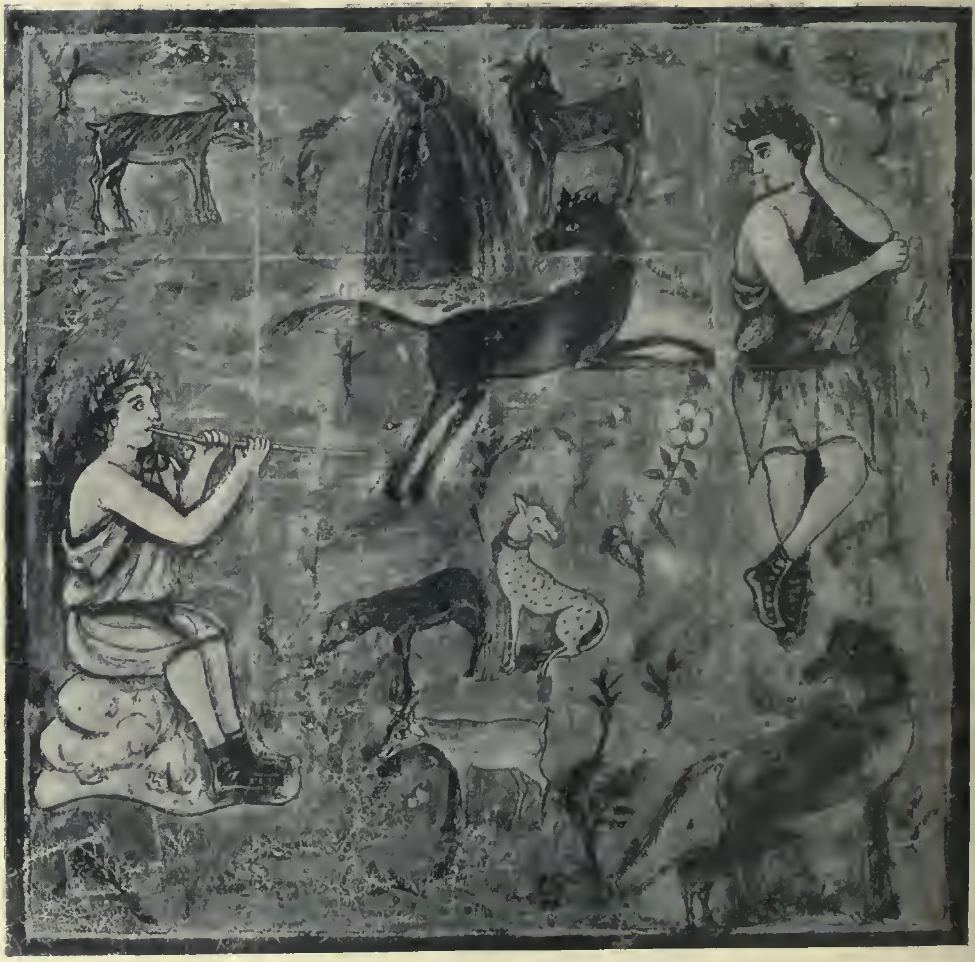

FIG. 73.—Illustration to Virgil's Eclogues
From the Virgil in the Vatican; *Cod. Vat. Lat.* 3867 (After *Wiener Genesis*, plate D)

V

WE have already referred at an earlier stage to the remarkable manuscript of the Book of Genesis in the Imperial Library at Vienna. It is of the fifth century, and a portion of the pictures which illustrate it are painted in a purely *illusionist* style. As an example we select the Meal of Pharaoh (Fig. 74) from Fol. 34 of the manuscript. Although the execution is weaker than in the paintings from the Thermæ of Constantine, and the painter was no longer sure of his perspective, the picture still belongs to a style of art which was unknown to earlier antiquity and to the Middle Ages, and which

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only became dominant in two periods of the history of art—from the end of the sixteenth century with many interruptions down to our time—and at an earlier date, from the age of the Flavii down to the days when a part of the craftsmen who painted the miniatures of ancient Christian codices still clung to the style, though others were already no longer competent to fashion their compositions according to its intrinsic requirements.

The process we may imagine to have been as follows: First the pages of the purple manuscript received the text, a broad space at the bottom being always reserved for the picture; then, when a portion of the manuscript or perhaps the whole was complete, the separate, still unbound quaterns were distributed among different craftsmen in one painter's workshop. Thus the last extant quaterns of the Genesis in Vienna fell to the lot of painters who, perhaps because they were chiefly accustomed to wall or easel paintings, worked in the broad method of illusionist painting which was still supreme at the time, while the first sets fell to others who, being chiefly occupied with book illustration, were no longer competent to reproduce correctly the illusionist effects which they also considered as the final aim to reach, and who accordingly translated their compositions into a style suited to the decoration of books, a style which was lineal rather than pictorial. I do not, however, suppose that there were models in the illusionist style for each one of the separate pages, which certain craftsmen had been capable of imitating, while others had already lost this power. My meaning is rather that in the execution of this codex the tendencies of real painting crossed with the lineal manner of book illustration which was then attempting to develop as an independent style.

Since we had set ourselves the task of finding out how ancient Christian miniature art came into existence, we were bound first to try to appreciate the *illusionist style*, to describe its essence, to determine the period of its rise and follow out the manner of its development and its duration. Already when glancing at the first pages of the "Genesis" with the Fall and its punishment (Figs. 1 and 2), we observed that the illustration belonged to the *continuous method of* *pictorial narration*, and it therefore became our duty to inquire how this *continuous method* was evolved, and how it combined with the *illusionist style* of painting. Finally, we see that these pictures are attached as running illustrations to a text the words of which they attempt to follow, and which, so long as there is no room for a misunderstanding, they never contradict in any important particular. That would have been impossible in the period of Alexander, and still impossible in that of Augustus. It was only in the second and third centuries A.D., when Roman Imperial art, as it developed, transformed Greek material in its own fashion, that formative art gradually came to follow a poetic text faithfully; from the Odyssey pictures of the Esquiline down to the Roman sarcophagi and the pictures of Philostratus we see this procedure, which was unknown to the oldest art, gaining the upper hand more and more, so that all that the illustrators of the Christian codices needed was to accommodate themselves to the ruling custom in order to attain to that complete concordance between picture and text which was so important a factor of the conditions which they had to satisfy. For in these stories it was no longer permissible to introduce alterations, as in the myths of older religions, because, at the time that the Christian stories were first illustrated, they had already attained a solid and stable form.

If, then, formative art at the time when the wish arose to illustrate the Bible had given free play to irrelevant fancy when dealing with the texts, a Christian art could never have developed, for every one to whom it was of importance to preserve the contents of both Old and New Testament intact, would have felt it his duty to ward off those too inventive artists. The Church would have been compelled to adopt the Synagogue's hostility to images. But the first and most weighty condition of the possibility of adapting a pictorial narrative to the use of Christians was already fulfilled through the preceding development in the handling of subject-matter. We, of course, are quite accustomed to see authors accurately illustrated by pictures, because this practice has maintained itself from the last days of the Antique up to our own times; but it was contrary to the spirit of all earlier ancient art

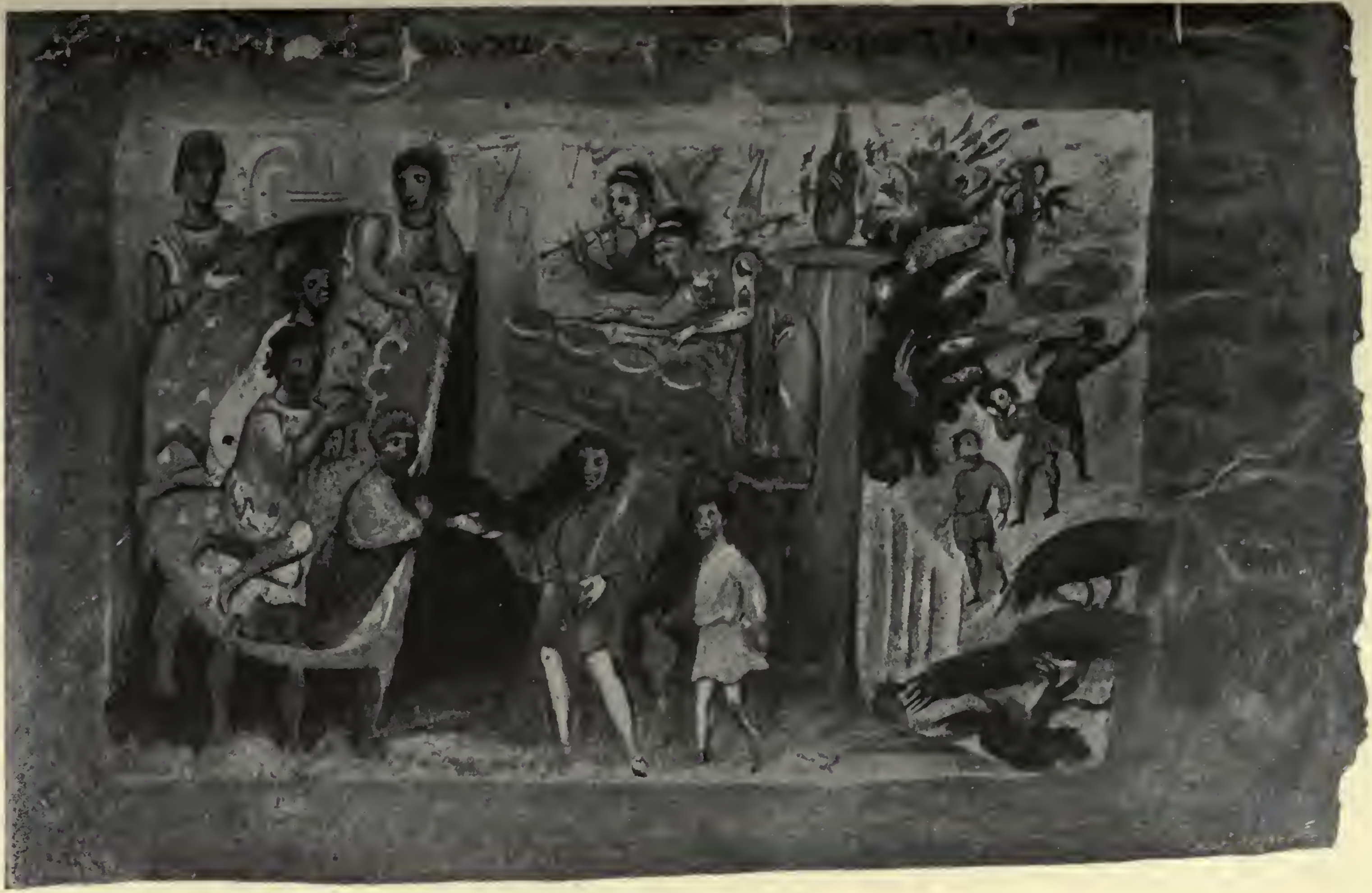

FIG. 74.—Pharaoh's Meal Book of Genesis in Vienna, Fol. XVII., 34 (After *Wiener Genesis*, plate A.)

until it entered upon those phases with which Christian art could effect a connection. Without examining into this development, the origin of the oldest Christian text-pictures could not have been clear to us.

It might be supposed that, as a natural consequence of so definite a pictorial rendering of the texts, the oldest pictures would be preserved unchanged together with the unaltered texts, and that at the most a slight, gradual change in accessories imposed by time and costume would take place. This, however, is not the case. Only a comparatively small number of Ancient Christian compositions struck root right into the Middle Ages, so that for centuries the history of the development of Christian typology is the history of the dispersion of an originally rich pictorial store. Had the beginning of Christian monumental art coincided with the period of conventional limitation to linear forms, or with the period of naturalism where definitely circumscribed figures, worked out in full detail, were placed side by side, then the figures that accompanied the texts, being executed in this style, could not have been lost even when roughly reproduced in the Middle Ages, because the essential part of them—that is, their definitely outlined form—would not have been so easy to miss.

Let us now turn to the right side of Fig. 74. where we see the baker on the gallows with the ravens flying towards him, with the boys—one of whom is pelting the hanging man with stones, whilst the others are coming away tired of this roguery—the shrub in the foreground, and the trellised gate shutting off the court of Pharaoh, with the tree above, the ascending road and the sky flushing rosily in the evening light.* All this together combines to produce an illusionist picture the details of which if isolated would scarcely have a comprehensible shape, while, as it is, the picture exhibits the illusionist painting of the period in still creditable activity. If the attempt were made to suppress the landscape in this example and to give mere outlines to the figures, then the composition, however cleverly conceived, would scarcely be comprehensible and would certainly lose all artistic charm. It is because the oldest Christian compositions were created in the illusionist style that it became impossible to imitate them in later times when the capacity for producing the illusion of life had been lost. In many cases it was impossible even to retain the compositions because the loss of the faculty to work in the illusionist manner carried with it the loss of the faculty for apprehending illusionist works of art. Accordingly, only those among the oldest compositions of Christian Art could survive which possessed a certain clearness imposed by their subject—as happens in many scenes of the Bible and of the Gospel—for this clearness could not vanish even when the artistic power of imparting lifelikeness through the methods of the illusionist style had been lost.

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* [It is needless to say that all this must be studied either in the original or in the excellent *coloured* reproductions in the *Wiener Genesis*.—Ed.]

This late antique art, however, in order to regain that clearness which was threatened in many instances by the illusionist style—the aim of which is to give momentary pictures, adopted the *continuous method of representation*, and we saw how in most cases it was this method which first made it possible to grasp an event clearly. *The oldest Christian compositions, therefore, in which the continuous method of narration prevailed, had by its means become capable of outlasting the Middle Ages, because it was only the clearest compositions that could survive. The habit of seeing almost all ancient portions of the Christian cycle continuously narrated has made the continuous method into a specific property of all Christian compositions down to the sixteenth century.*

Thus it has been no lost labour of love to attempt to make out first the development and transformation of Greek art in Rome, then to follow the rise of illusionism, to show the manner in which, while it allied itself with the continuous method of representation, it transformed the artistic material, because in this connection the older Christian compositions not only become more comprehensible as regards subject —since their connection with the text always made them so—but become more comprehensible artistically. Considered in this manner they no longer constitute an innovation which is only interesting as subject, and which as regards its art forms is isolated, but they become witnesses to the condition of art in the fourth century. In that these compositions are connected with the pictures of Philostratus—illustrate them in fact better than does any other class of monuments—they can no longer be looked upon as effecting a break in the even course of artistic development.

The picture descriptions of Philostratus furnish at once material help for the explanation of a phenomenon which is remarkably striking in the illustrations of the "Genesis"—I mean the rendering of atmospheric effects. The pictures in the "Genesis" of *Joseph in Egypt* show a uniform but yet noteworthy attempt at reproducing in the backgrounds some definite mood of the southern sky. Those transitions from violet into lilac in which the buildings of the background are steeped and dissolve with a glimmer, may be observed on fine spring evenings in the south—for instance in Naples. I mention this city because the conical hill with the smoke-cloud on one of the pictures (Fig. 75) is best explained as a representation of Vesuvius. This would point to a Campanian origin for the manuscript. I only wish to call attention to the point, for with so small a number of late ancient codices it naturally does not occur to me to want to localise any one of them definitely. We should look in vain among the Pompeian pictures for so correct an observation and so tender a rendering of atmospheric moods, while on the landscapes from the Esquiline the rendering of air is certainly not a strong point. A period of development must have intervened, for which we have a further characteristic proof on another page. After Jacob has wrestled with the angel he turns towards the rising sun, which pierces with fiery beams through a thick morning mist, colouring trees and rocks with its rosy light (Fig. 76). This has certainly been executed by a painter who no longer understood how to produce the effect he desired, since he entirely omitted the air and only gives the sudden emergence of the clouded light of heaven and the ensuing transformation of the local colours into rose; but the picture is a proof that these phenomena were observed in the art of painting where they had even become common property. As a proof of this we may point to Philostratus, who in his description of the "Memnon" (i. 7) tells how the Colossus was reddened by the rays of the rising sun. Such things were possible

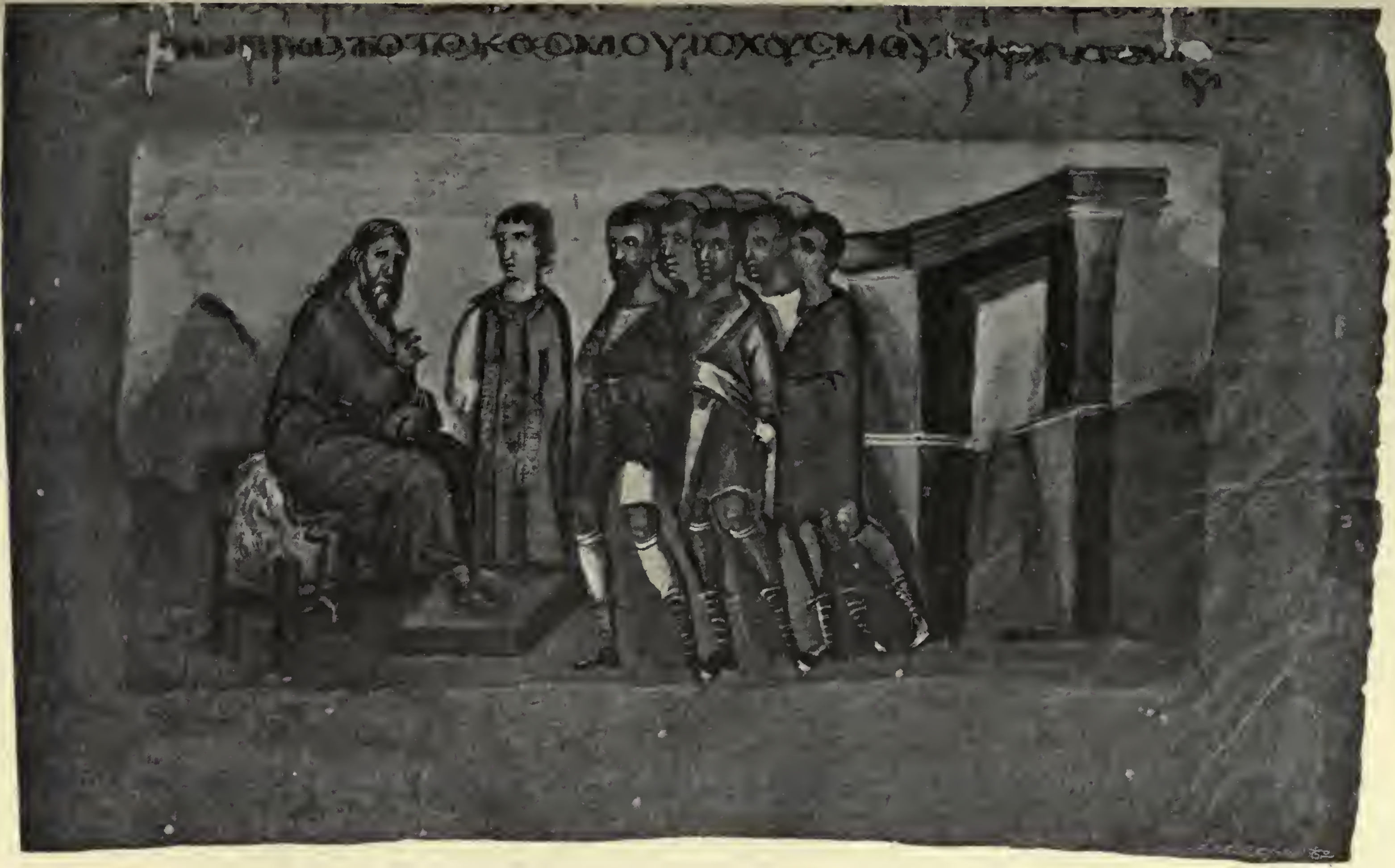


FIG. 75.—Jacob exhorts his Sons. Book of Genesis in Vienna, Fol. XXIII. 45 (After *Wiener Genesis*, plate XLVI.)

only through that observation of the moods of the air at the different times of the day and their varying illumination, which had taken place in painting proper. Philostratus likewise bears witness to the manifold nature of this observation. The "Antigone" (ii. 19) is set in moonlight, and we saw from the later Pompeian paintings that such moon-landscapes had already been attempted in the first century. Philostratus next witnesses to the development of similar night pieces in his "Cassandra" (ii. 10), where a closed chamber was lit by lamps, or in the "Comus" (i. 2), where in the general darkness certain parts of the figures are illumined by a small torch, or in the "Pelops" (i. 19), where during the night the luminous shoulder of the hero, shining miraculously through his garment, diffuses a pale light. In the picture first alluded to—the "Memnon"—he describes a complicated scene in the continuous style where, within one frame, the evening, the advent of night and her disappearance, and further the appearance of the first rays of the sun, are represented. In the fact that the "Genesis" still recalls the possibility at least of imitating such phenomena, lies, I think, its great importance for the history of art. It affords the last evidence of the representation of atmospheric phenomena, even as the "Wooden Horse" in Pompei affords the first. It is for this reason that, contrary to the general opinion, I would not venture to date the "Genesis" later than the fourth century, that is, in the last period which may still be credited with feeling the after-effect of those efforts to obtain an illusionist representation of nature.

There is still another observation of colour change indicated by Philostratus which we meet in the "Genesis." He mentions that the roses of the wreath worn by Comus, which was illumined by the torch, were painted yellow while the shadows were blue (i. 2, 247 k). Philostratus, assuredly, accurately described what he had seen; but the painter of the picture had observed nature incorrectly. He was correct in painting yellow the white or reddish roses which were illumined by an artificial light; but in the case of artificial illumination the shadows are never blue, but vary from grey to brownish or black; the painter can only have hit upon the notion of painting the shadows in this night

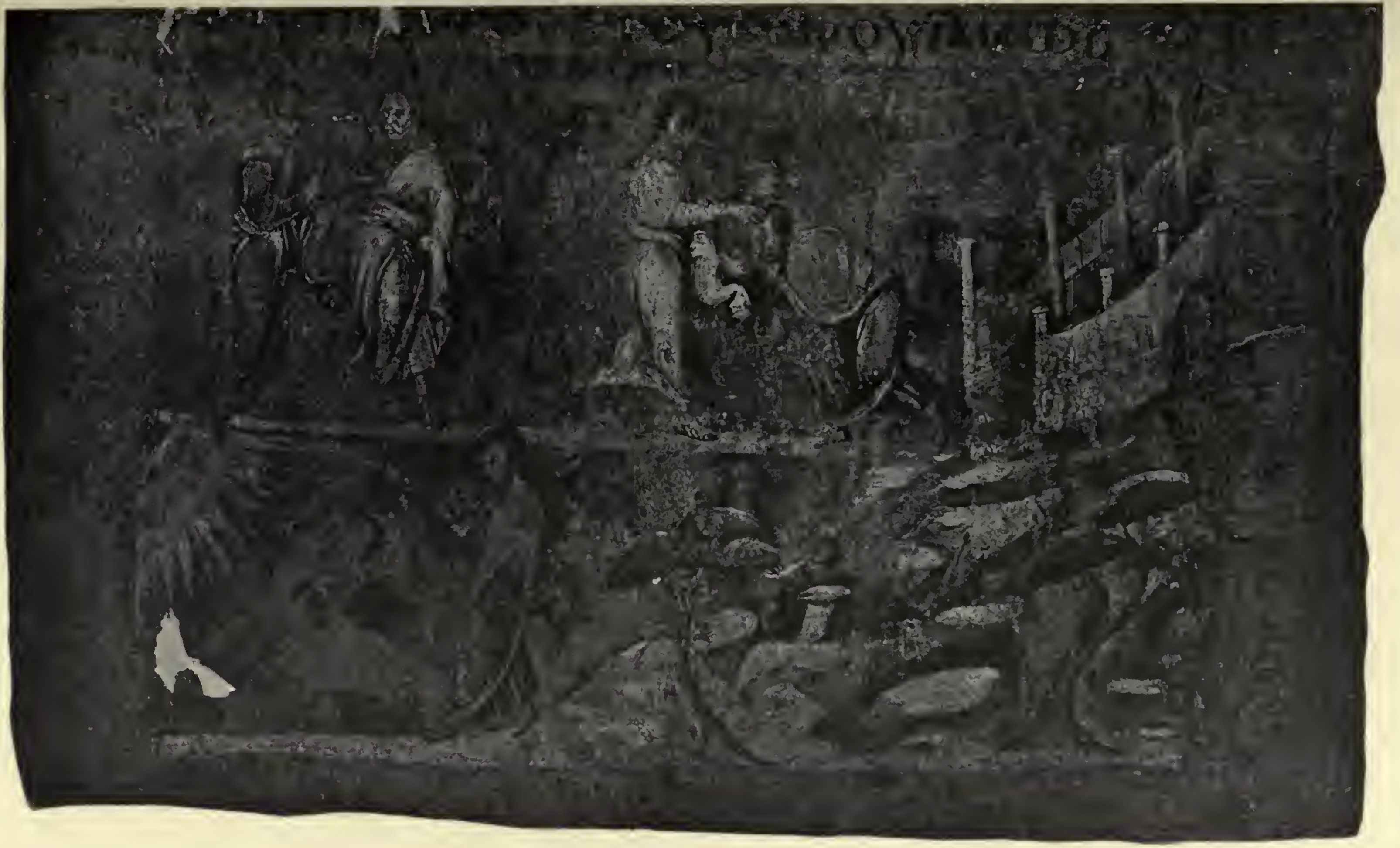
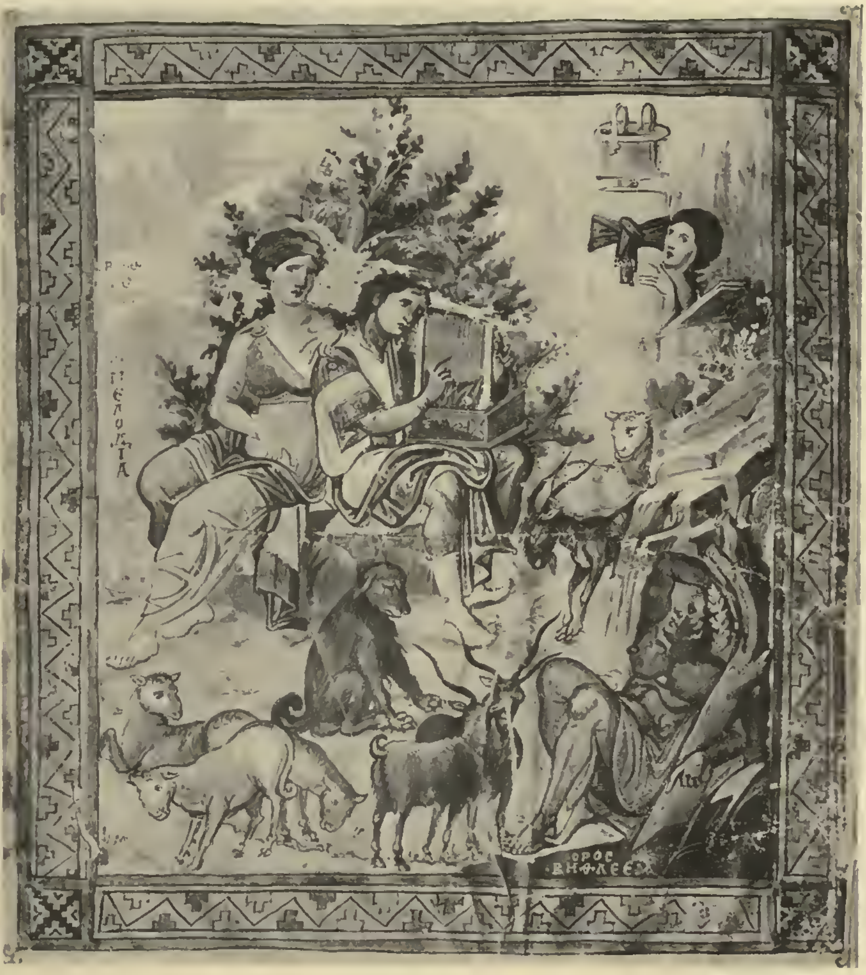


FIG. 76.—The Lord blesses Jacob. Book of Genesis in Vienna, Fol. XII. 24 (After *Wiener Genesis*, plate XXIV.)

piece blue, because he was accustomed to render strong shadows in this manner in pictures that were powerfully illumined by the light of day. That was an accurate observation; for in the South the deep day shadows are distinctly blue. This passage in Philostratus is important evidence of the progress which artistic observation had made since the days of the downfall of Pompei. In Pompei all day shadows, when they are introduced—which is rare because out-door painting gladly avoids them—are given in warm or at the most in neutral tints. But the "Genesis" of Vienna again links on in this respect with Philostratus, seeing that in those last pages on which atmospheric phenomena are best rendered, the receding objects which lose their local colour, take on in its place a blue or—as in the pictures of our most modern painters—a violet colour. This coincidence in the observation of nature between the painters of Philostratus and those of the "Genesis" is again a proof that Philostratus does not describe pictures of bygone days, but pictures which cannot be very far removed from the paintings of the "Genesis."

Now if the "Genesis" enables us to look upon ancient Christian painting in its execution as continuing the kind of painting described by Philostratus, and if the mosaic in the Church of the Lateran, on the other hand, has shown that his very themes lasted into a period in which a monumental Christian art had already come into existence, we shall be compelled to consider those among the Christian compositions to be the oldest in which the Biblical themes are handled and treated in a manner similar to the mythological subjects of Philostratus. And compositions of this kind, even when we come upon them in late copies, must still be considered as the oldest evidence for that period of Christian art, when, freeing itself from the sepulchral art of the Catacombs which was significant as decoration rather than art, it had applied itself to the creation of a new cycle.

We possess the illustrations of a book of songs, in copies of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, plentifully interpolated and augmented by material from all the intervening centuries of Byzantine art, though their originator must have lived at the beginning of the



DAVID, FROM AN ILLUMINATED PSALTER.
(Paris.)

Plate XIV.

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fourth century.* Let us look at the title-page of these manuscripts, which is reproduced from the Psalter in Paris (Plate XIV.).† David sits on the mountain playing and singing. "Melody" has sat down by him and leans upon his shoulder. "Echo" answers him from the wood, peeping from behind the pillar upon which stands a votive vessel. In front sits the faithful dog watching the flocks while the shepherd sings. The mountain-god reclines and listens in the right-hand corner of the picture, and on the left in the background, in the far distance, appear on the horizon the buildings of the city of Bethlehem. Had we found this picture painted somewhere on a wall, without the inscription which brings it into connection with the Bible, there is no doubt that many people would have dated the original, as they do the pictures of Philostratus, as far back as the period of Alexander, if not even placed it in the fifth century before our era. As it is, considered as a development of what was attempted in Pompei, it is evidence that we correctly apprehended the historical development of ancient painting when we recognised that the Pompeian paintings represented the end of Hellenistic and the beginning of Roman art. And we must remember at the same time that the late copyists of this picture no longer understood, as did the creator of the original, how to produce the intended effect of recession in the background, and thus the best part of the effect is destroyed. Another picture shows the prophet Isaiah sallying forth in the morning towards a flowery slope to converse with God.‡ *Night* is leaving him and extinguishes her torch, while *Phosphorus*, represented as a little boy, comes forward to greet him with his torch raised on high. Even in these late imitations, the greyish-purple figure of *Night*, the light tones of the boy's flesh, the two torches and the ray projected downwards by the hand of God, produce a pleasant light-picture, the original of which points back to the "Comus" and the "Memnon" of Philostratus as pieces of the same class. A picture in the Vatican Bible (Reg. i.) shows us a grandly conceived representation, in the *continuous style*, of the "Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai." The foreground is occupied by the People of Israel awaiting the miracle in the clefts of the mountain; the mountain-god himself, drawn in bold foreshortening among the rocks, looks towards the summit up which Moses, loosening his sandals, climbs, to reappear immediately after as he receives the tables from the hand of God. Among the Christian miniatures we find only scattered remnants of this monument in which we are still so near to ancient easel painting.

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* The codices in question have been carefully put together by Kondakoff, *Histoire de l'art Byzantin*, Tom. II., Paris, 1891, p. 30 ff. They consist of a Psalter in Paris (Gr. 139), two manuscripts in the Vatican (Reg. Gr. I. and Palat. Gr. 381), and one in the Barberini Library (No. 202). Kondakoff considers their illustrations as a work of a Byzantine Renascence in the tenth century. This, however, is quite impossible in view of the numerous accurately drawn antique details in the designs which have been left unaltered.

† I owe this reproduction, which is about half the natural size, to the kindness of Léopold Delisle.

‡ Given by Kondakoff, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 37, after the Paris Psalter, 139; repeated in the Isaiah of the Vatican, No. 755, reproduced in d'Agincourt.

Only scanty fragments remain to us of the bulk of the oldest Christian miniatures. But just as a kind fate has preserved in the copies of that book of songs a great example of the tendency of Christian paintings which is connected with the fantastic pictorial mythology of expiring antiquity, so does the Rotulus with the History of Joshua in the Vatican (Fig. 77) preserve for us a counterpart of Roman triumphal art. Among all the works of painting none comes nearer to the reliefs of the column of Trajan (that is, to the essence of its artistic character, not of course to its historical place) than this long roll of eleven metres and a half, upon which the deeds of Joshua, the son of Nun, are represented uninterruptedly. Even the original inscriptions which are now with the exception of a very few letters faded and effaced, and have been replaced by texts inserted at a much later date, were Greek. This is again a proof of the regression of art in later antiquity from the Romans to the Greeks. Like the Emperor on the triumphal columns, the Biblical hero is seen marching with his army, fighting, triumphing, conquering, directing; and again like the Emperor on the Roman monuments he always reappears in person. He is represented twenty-one times on this roll, while behind him the landscape unfolds continuously, transforming itself with the scenes and for the scenes. As the column of Trajan is the most extensive work in sculpture of the *continuous method of representation*, so is the Joshua-Rotulus its most extensive work in painting. But it is not only an

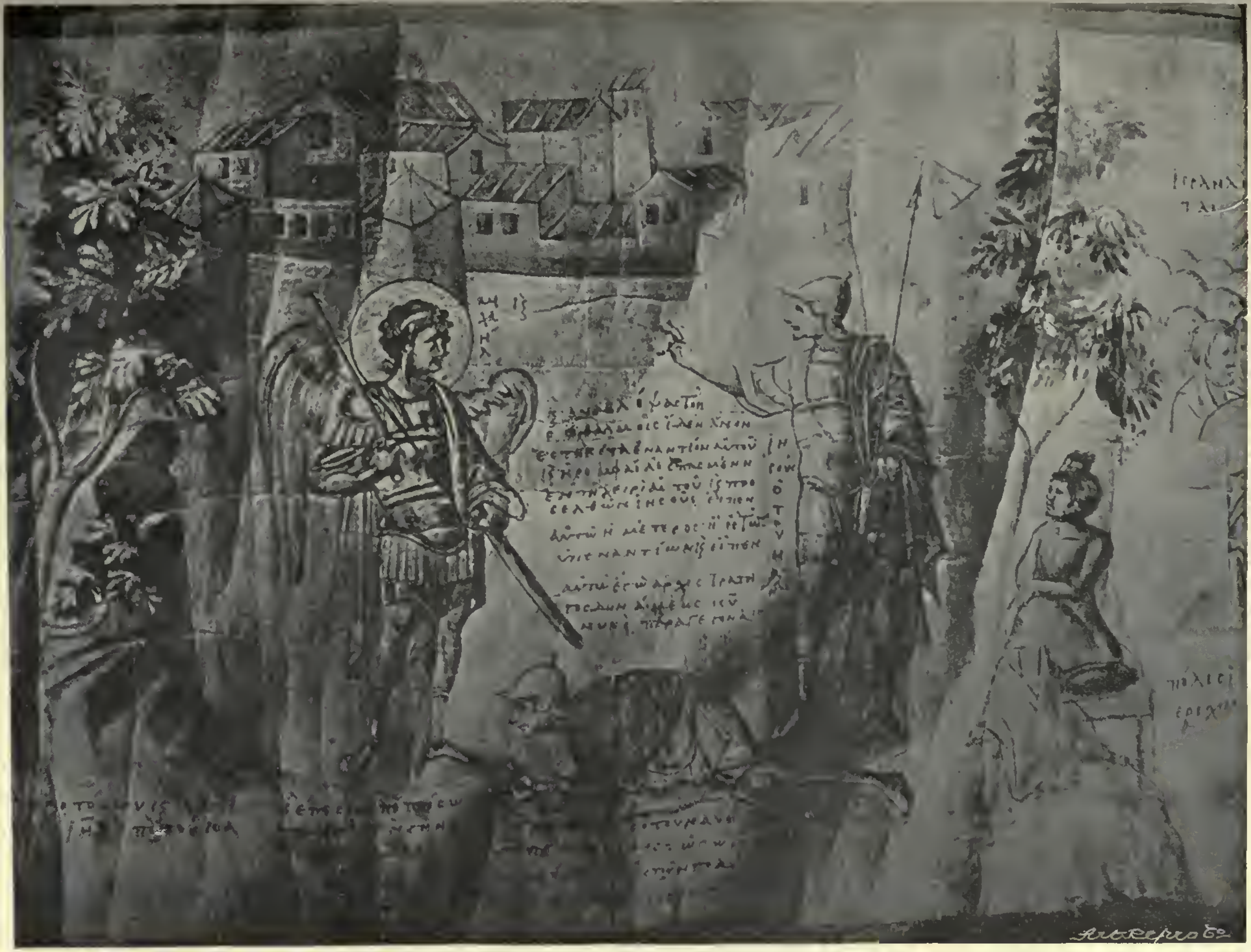

FIG. 77. An Angel appears to Joshua before Jericho. From the *rotulus* with the story of Joshua in the Vatican (Jos. v. 13–15)
(After *Wiener Genesis*, plate C)

instance of the continuous method; it is also a noble example of a sound understanding of the illusionist manner as applied to illustration. The figures of the foreground are drawn in a few firm lines, lightly shaded, while the weapons are painted a light blue modified by the admixture of body colour in bold contrast to the garments of transparent purple. The distance deepens; hills, trees, cities, are rendered with broad strokes of the brush that fade away towards the background. That is a method which in its sure mastery of artistic means, in spite of the apparently playful ease of the execution, reminds us, like so many other tendencies of Roman Imperial art, of the Japanese; it is like an enlarged mirror reflexion of the diminutive works of these great artists. The Greek Bibles of the tenth and eleventh centuries which preserve the fundamental traits of the compositions of the Rotulus,* not copied but traditionally maintained and transformed, are the best examples of the after-effects of these compositions. Our illustration shows the angel appearing to Joshua, who, before knowing who he is, questions him and then prostrates himself before him; it is a notable example of how the continuous style, when it had elaborated the compendious manner of the sarcophagi, passed into Christian art. The city in the distance, with its second representation in the form of the city goddess, and the mountains with their mountain-gods on the other sections, who look down from the summits like watchmen, all point to developed models in a style of triumphal painting, every trace of which, with the exception of this Christian after-echo, has been lost.

Although the compositions of this roll were preserved until the Middle Ages, yet its sure and delicate technique was lost and was replaced by the ordinary kind of illuminated codices, which, instead of technical inventions specially adapted to them, display a heavy style of painting, imitated from wall or easel pictures. Others amongst these oldest codices, which had originally been illuminated in the style of easel paintings, were exactly copied at a later date, like the book of songs referred to above, and thus afforded in later centuries good patterns of accurate draughtsmanship. This happened not only in Greece itself,

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* Vatic. græc. 746; Vatic. græc. 747; there is a similar Bible in Smyrna.

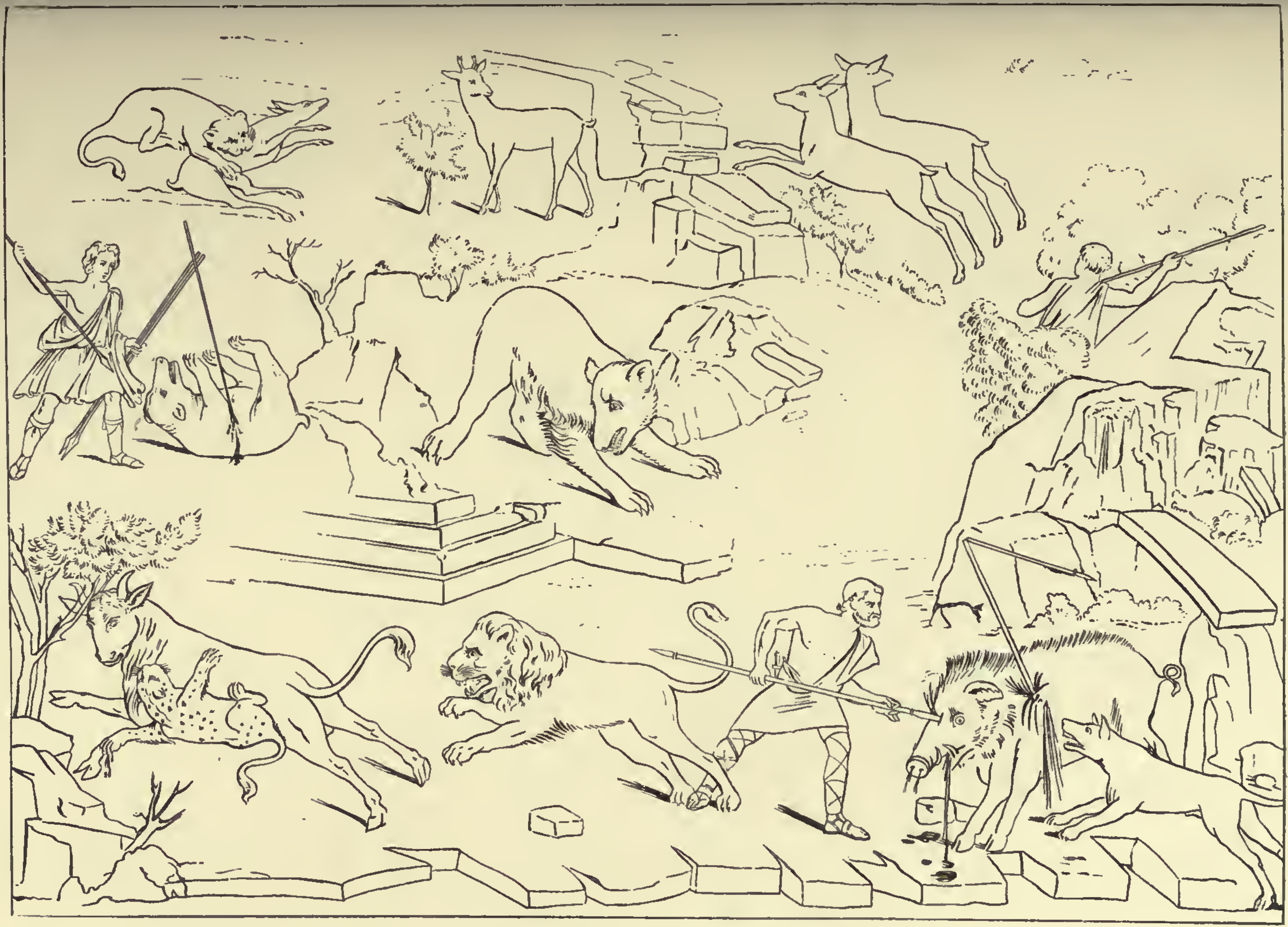

Fig. 78.—The Great Hunt. Wall painting in Pompei

but also in the West, as is well shown by a codex *de Agrimensoria* in the Vatican. In this respect also the "Genesis" of Vienna betrays the uncertainty of a period of transition. Those of its miniaturists who work rather as draughtsmen leave the purple ground uncovered and try by this means to attain to the free effect of the Rotulus, although they immediately destroy this by their heavily painted figures. Other—and occasionally the same—miniaturists cover the ground completely with colour, and thus attempt to compete in pictorial effect with wall and easel painting.

Still other attempts were made, beside those represented by the Rotulus, to decorate the illuminated manuscripts in a more lineal style, attempts which may have had their influence upon the "Genesis." One among these is remarkable as being a popular atttempt. In the gardens of the Pompeian houses we not unfrequently come upon landscapes with life-sized animals. Sometimes these are animal fables;* here a sick lion is conversing with a stag, there an elephant with a snake †—in others there are fights,‡ or again, hunts like the one in the *Casa della Caccia Grande* § (Fig. 78), which served at the same time as a diagram of all animals fit to be hunted. These pictures cannot possibly have been intended as serious works of art for grown-up people. It is the style of decoration of the Villa of Livia, childishly translated. One might fancy the courtyard enlivened by a number of children, to whom was imparted varied information in connection with this picture. I once before had occasion to explain why I imagined the well-known large illuminated Virgil of the Vatican to be a child's book which was given to boys who were learning to read in Virgil.|| The illustration to the Georgics (Fig. 73) suffices to show how nearly these pictures come to the animal pictures in Pompei; it is the same method of conceiving the subject, except that here it is, after the fashion of later times, brought into connection with the text of a poet. Another Virgil of the Vatican, artistically the least important of all ancient illuminated manuscripts, shows the preference of the Roman artists for a representation

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* Helbig 1583, 1584. † Sogliani, 701. ‡ Helbig, 1585 ff.

§ Helbig, 1520; our illustration is after Raoul Rochette, *Choix de Peintures*, pl. xvi.

|| *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Königshauses*, vol. xiv. p. 197.

geographically mapped out, while the *Iliad* in Milan, which in the picture where Hephaestus dries up the Scamander still comes so near to Philostratus, shows the predominance of the *continuous* principle in all the manuscripts of the Classics. Here Achilles is represented first in the Assembly and then, within the same frame, going down with Patroclus to the ships;* and here also Chryseus is seen embarking and disembarking.† Menelaus is wounded by Pandarus, and—in the same picture—healed by Machaon.‡ Then in the representation of a fight, Sarpedon appears three times, always marked out from the thick of the fray, § somewhat like the Emperor on the triumphal monuments, or else Athena looks down from the clouds, and in so doing she looks down upon her own figure as she mounts the chariot of Diomede; ¶ and so on through many of the extant fragments of this codex.

Of these three illustrated manuscripts of poets the "Virgil" first named is the most important owing to its fresh blunt childishness and to its popular character; it betrays no pre-occupation with painting proper or its processes, and in its simple manner shows the course which healthy book illustration should follow, a course which was really recovered again in the later Middle Ages. The "Joshua" is an example of how such a lineal method could develop into a work of art, and it would be worth investigating whether all the historical books of the Bible did not at one time exist in similar *rotuli.* The technique of painting proper had, however, become so all-powerful in its influence, that it found its way again to the codices, and in its false pretence at elegance supplanted the method by contours. Yet the very nature of illuminated manuscripts, and above all the clearness which was their aim, brought it about that the illusionist manner of painting was replaced little by little, even in full-page coloured illustrations, by a more lineal method. This led at the same time to a return to naturalism, since accuracy of detail was substituted for the broad strokes of the brush.

Thus the ancient illuminated Christian manuscripts afford an example of a mixture of styles, not, however, because the separate illustrations fluctuate between the one and the other tendency, but because they were executed now by artists trained in the processes of wall and of easel painting, and now by others who aimed at a distinctive miniature-technique to which they were already trained. These manuscripts bear witness to a remarkable transition in which all the art tendencies of the three preceding centuries can still be traced, but in which, on the other hand, the roots of a new art—the art of the Middle Ages—may be observed.

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* Angelo Mai, *Iliadis fragmenta antiquissima*, Mediolanum, MDCCXIX, pl. iii.

† Ib. pl. xviii. ‡ Ib. pl. xv. § Ib. pl. xxi. ¶ Ib. pl. xxii.

Theologians, who are not familiar with the development of formative art, might well believe that for his new tasks the artist desired to create out of his own brain completely new forms which had nothing in common with a dying art, the purport of which had been different. But even as the Fathers could not invent for themselves a language in which to expound the doctrines of Christianity, but had to make shift with Greek and Latin, so too the Christian artists could not dispense with the art forms and methods which lay ready to their hand.

The stylist can assuredly introduce novelties or archaisms into language, but it must all take place within narrow limits if he wishes to be understood by his contemporaries. Thus the artist can also seek out archaic forms or introduce new ones, yet he cannot withdraw in the process too far from the stock of forms common to his time, especially not if he also wishes to be understood and to effect an impression. It was the aim of these essays, then, to show that the peculiar style of the ancient Christian paintings rests upon the development of Roman art, all the methods of which it adopts in order to become comprehensible. If I have succeded in discovering, incidentally, some principles of Roman art, I may venture to hope that the essays are not without importance for the proper appreciation of the development of ancient art also.

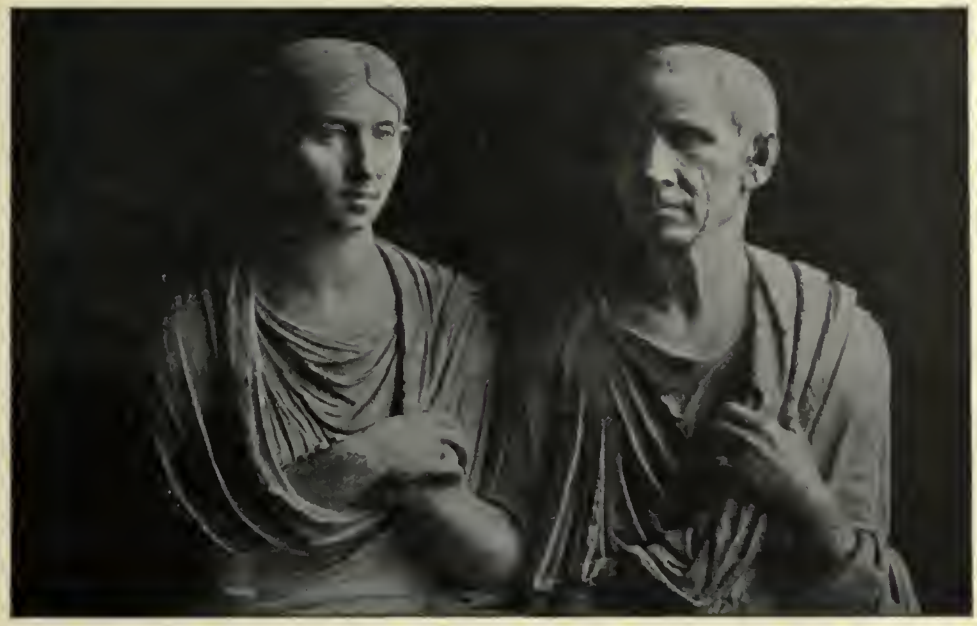

FIG. B.—Portrait Busts on a Roman Grave Stone (Vatican). (From a Photograph by D. Anderson)

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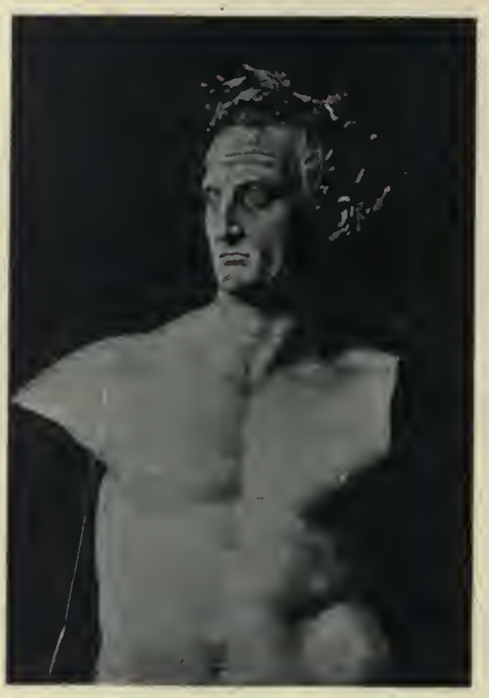

Fig. C.—Portrait of Nerva with the restorations omitted (photo. Alinari)

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